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TAYLOR.

A LIFE
OF
GEN. ZACHARY TAYLOR;

COMPRISING
A NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

CONNECTED
WITH HIS PROFESSIONAL CAREER,

DERIVED FROM PUBLIC DOCUMENTS AND PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE;

BY J. REESE FRY;

AND

AUTHENTIC INCIDENTS OF HIS EARLY YEARS,

FROM MATERIALS COLLECTED BY

ROBERT T. CONRAD.

WITH AN ORIGINAL AND ACCURATE PORTRAIT

AND

ELEVEN ELEGANT ILLUSTRATIONS

Of the Battles of Fort Harrison, Okee-cho-bee, Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, and Buena Vista, &c., &c.

DESIGNED BY F. O. C. DARLEY.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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It was expected, by the publishers of this volume, that, according to their announcement, a Life of General Taylor, by R. T. CONRAD, Esq., would be ready at the present time. To collect materials respecting the early years of General Taylor, Mr. Conrad visited Kentucky during the past summer, and was about to begin the work, when prevented by other engagements. His memoranda, however, were kindly placed at the disposal of the publishers, and have supplied interesting facts for the present volume, for the use of which they make this acknowledgment on their own behalf and that of the author.

PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER 10, 1847.

## PREFACE.

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THE time is not yet mature for a biography of General Taylor, which will do thorough justice to his character and military services. Only eighteen months have elapsed, since his ability as a commander began to be generally recognized. His varied and extraordinary achievements within that period have justly excited popular curiosity regarding his early life, as well as his late career. To meet, therefore, a want of the day, this volume has been prepared. No profession is made respecting it, except that pains have been taken to procure accurate information touching the circumstances of Taylor's family, the incidents of his youth, and his services in the Indian wars. The outline of his proceedings in Mexico is drawn partly from private letters, but chiefly from his own official correspondence.

It may be proper to add, that, to make this volume acceptable to a class of present readers, it was thought expedient to be diffuse in some instances where permanent favour would have suggested condensation, and to be brief in others, where the same reason would have demanded comprehensive statements or remarks. Still it is believed that the narrative is neither impeded by irrelevant matter, nor deficient in any essential particular.



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M A P  
OF THE  
SEAT OF GENERAL TAYLOR'S OPERATIONS  
IN  
MEXICO.



(To face page 13.)

# LIFE OF GENERAL TAYLOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

The Taylor Family—Kentucky in 1775—Birth of Zachary Taylor—Emigration of the Family to Kentucky—Hancock Taylor—Danger from the Indians—Zachary Taylor's Schoolmaster—His First Lesson in Tactics—His Prosperity as a Farmer—Peace with the Indians—Volunteers to oppose Burr's Designs—Commissioned a Lieutenant in U. S. Army—His Marriage—The Indians under Tecumseh—Harrison's Expedition against them—Taylor promoted to a Captaincy—War with England—Attack on Fort Harrison—Taylor's Defence of it—His First Despatch—Further Services—Major by Brevet.

THE republican principles and customs of our country happily forbid personal distinction founded merely upon ancestral rank. We incline rather to celebrate a name first made illustrious in our own day, than one which borrows its light from the glory of other generations. Yet we fail not in due respect for the character which worthily sustains inherited superiority. In this spirit, we commence a biography of General Taylor, by citing the honourable families whose blood is mingled in his veins. Original obscurity or early trials could not have shadowed his genius or repressed his energies. But springing from a stock, to be worthy of which were a singular merit, he has proved himself its noblest scion, and, amid a halo of kindred names, his own has suddenly risen to be the highest and brightest.

The family of the Virginia Taylors is allied to the oldest and most distinguished of that state. Its first representatives emigrated from England, and settled in the south-eastern part of the colony, towards the close of the seventeenth century.

In the different branches of it are found the Lees, the Barbours, the Madisons, the Conways, the Pendletons, the Hunts, the Taliaferros, the Gaineses, and others, whose public services and virtues, during a hundred years, are commemorated in our colonial and national history.

Richard Taylor, the father of General Zachary Taylor, was born in Virginia, on the 22d day of March, 1744. He appears to have received a plain but solid education, and evinced in his boyhood the daring and adventurous spirit, which led him to seek a home and independence in the wilderness of the Mississippi valley. While yet at school, he entered into a compact, with some of his mates, to visit Kentucky when they should grow up. He, at least, adhered to his purpose. When still very young, he set out, and reached "the dark and bloody ground," on which, at that time, the dwelling of a civilized man had not been reared. His survey of the country extended to the Mississippi, down which he proceeded as far as Natchez. From that point, his face was then turned homeward; and, without guide or companion, through pathless woods, over rivers and mountains, fearless alike of the seasons, of savages, or of any peril of his long and lonely way, he walked back to his father's house in Virginia. All that he had seen served but to confirm, in his imagination, the charms of border life; and, although he continued to reside many years in Virginia, he subsequently fulfilled his desire of making his home in the great west.

On the 20th of August, 1779, when thirty-five years old, he was married to Sarah Strother, a young lady, of good family, then in her twentieth year. At this time, he held a colonel's commission in the Virginia Line, and served with zeal and honour through the revolutionary war.

Five sons and three daughters were the offspring of this marriage,—the first child born in 1781. Zachary Taylor, the subject of this memoir, the third son of Colonel Richard Taylor, was born in Orange county, Virginia, on the twenty-fourth day of November, 1784. In the following summer, his father fulfilled his long-cherished intention of emigrating to Kentucky.



Only ten years before, the first habitation of a white man had been erected in the vast region between the western boundary of Virginia and the Mississippi. Within this period, a few settlements had been made, insufficient, however, from their feebleness and isolated positions, to secure to the emigrant adequate protection from the Indians, much less to afford him the most usual comforts of civilized life. Peril and privation, to which only superior courage and fortitude were equal, were the lot of all who sought a home in the primitive woods, and in the hunting-grounds of hostile savages.

In the emigration of Colonel Richard Taylor to this country, he had been preceded by his brother Hancock, a brave and intelligent man, who fell a sacrifice in the enterprise of surveying parts of the Ohio valley. He is said to have selected, for his farm, the site of the city of Louisville. He is thus mentioned in Marshall's History of Kentucky.

“After Douglass, (a surveyor, who died on the Kentucky river, while engaged in his profession,) and pursued by a fate more malignant, was Hancock Taylor; a surveyor also, and a man of more enterprise. He, too, landed at the falls of the Ohio, and, after making a number of surveys, by virtue of military warrants, was killed by the Indians, who made a sudden onset before he was apprized of danger. Thus fell an intelligent and worthy man. One of his attendants had the precaution to secure and bring off his book of field notes, which was rendered effectual [adopted as authority,] by an act of the legislature.”

Under the guidance of such men, and under such circumstances for the development of his bold spirit and active intellect, Zachary Taylor passed his infant years. The hardships and dangers of border life were to him as familiar as ease and security to the child of metropolitan luxury. His father had settled in Jefferson county, about two miles from the Ohio river, and five miles from Louisville, where he acquired a large estate by his industry and thrift, and honourable consideration by his intelligence, bravery, and patriotism. As Louisville rose into importance, his own fortune and local dis-

tion increased. He received from President Washington a commission as collector of that port, New Orleans being then in possession of the Spaniards. He had been a personal friend of Washington, prior to his emigration from Virginia, and his worth was, therefore, familiar to that great man, from early knowledge as well as later report.

One of the chief cares of Colonel Taylor was the education of his children. During the first ten or fifteen years of his residence in Kentucky, the country being sparsely settled, and exposed to Indian enemies, this purpose could be accomplished only in a very partial degree. A school, for the rudiments of English merely, was established in his neighbourhood by Elisha Ayres, a native of Connecticut, who afterwards returned to that state, and now resides, a venerable gentleman of four-score years, at Preston, in the vicinity of Norwich. A letter from him, written during the past summer to the author of this volume, in answer to one of inquiry concerning the school-boy days of General Taylor, explains satisfactorily the circumstances in which they were passed, and exhibits the character of our hero, at that time, in a light worthy of his mature reputation.

In the language of Mr. Ayres, "the Kentuckians were then a warlike and chivalrous people, and they were often engaged in offensive or defensive skirmishes with the Indians. A number were known to be in the woods not far distant from the school-house, and, on one occasion, one of them was shot, wearing a British uniform. In their hostility to the Americans, they were encouraged and sustained by the British authorities on the Northern frontier. There was a Mr. Whetsel, in the neighbourhood of the school, who, having been once chased by three or four Indians, loaded his rifle while running, and successively shot them all. This exploit made Whetsel famous, and he became the instructor of the young men and boys in the neighbourhood, in his mode of maintaining a running fire. Among his pupils, it is believed, was young Zachary." It may be remarked, upon this recital of "young Zachary's" first training in the art of war, that he has apparently forgotten





TAYLOR'S FIRST LESSON IN THE ART OF WAR.



the "running" lessons, although, in other respects, he abundantly justifies the tuition of the valiant Whetsel. Among the anecdotes current in Kentucky respecting his childhood, is one of his watching at home with his brother, and casting bullets, while his father was out engaged with the Indians. Such, in fact, was the constant necessity of guarding against these cunning and implacable foes, that the physician of the neighbourhood habitually rode with pistols at his saddlebows.

All attempts to placate or subdue the Indians had failed, prior to the date of Wayne's decisive victory over them. In 1795, the year following that important achievement, a general peace was concluded. From that period, the population of Kentucky increased rapidly, and civilized labour and enterprise began to enjoy their due reward. Zachary Taylor was reared by his father to his own profession—that of a farmer; and, until his majority, was practically engaged in it, working with his own hands, and laying the foundation of the robust health, hardy habits, and persevering industry, which have borne the test of various climate, rude fare, and severe duty, during a military life of more than thirty years. The service very early engaged his affections and excited his ambition. When Aaron Burr's movements in the west began to arouse suspicion, the patriotic young men of Kentucky formed volunteer companies, to oppose his designs by arms, if occasion should demand such a resort. Zachary Taylor, and one or more of his brothers, were enrolled in a troop raised for this purpose.

After the alarm had subsided, he returned to his farm, which he continued to cultivate successfully, until the death of his brother, Lieutenant Taylor. The latter held a commission in the United States army, and, dying in the service, an opportunity was afforded Zachary of obtaining the vacancy. Through the influence of his relative, James Madison, of his uncle, Major Edmund Taylor, and of his father, this object was accomplished; and, on the 3d of May, 1808, he received his commission as first lieutenant in the seventh regiment of United States Infantry. At this time, he was already in the enjoyment



of a fortune, which, although moderate, was more than sufficient for his wants. But the activity of his mind, his aspirations for a larger sphere of employment, and, it may be, for the distinction of an officer in the national service, were superior to the inclination for the quiet and profitable occupation of landed proprietor. His first experience in his new vocation had nearly proved fatal. He was ordered to report himself to General Wilkinson in New Orleans; and, being taken there with the yellow fever, was obliged to return home to recruit his health. He appears to have employed his time sedulously in the study of his profession, as we find him, three years from this time, fulfilling with honour a dangerous and important post.

The aggressive policy of England had been meanwhile preparing the public mind for the declaration of war. The emissaries of her government, employed among the Indian tribes north of the Ohio, had incited anew their hostility to the American settlers, who were kept in constant apprehension of an attack. Under these circumstances, it was deemed advisable by the government to make the first demonstration, and General Harrison, then Governor of the North-west Territory, was ordered to march a force into the Indian country. In the progress of this expedition he erected on the Wabash River, in Indiana, a block-house and stockade, which received the name of Fort Harrison. Lieutenant Taylor took part in this duty, and was afterwards kept actively engaged in watching the Indians and thwarting their adverse movements. His marriage had taken place in 1810, and he left at home a young wife and child to join his command. Communications with his family were difficult and infrequent,—at times so long interrupted that he was supposed to have fallen a victim to the perilous enterprise in which he was employed. His services were appreciated by President Madison, who rewarded them by a captain's commission, in the beginning of the year 1812. He was then placed in command of Fort Harrison, and soon afterwards Congress declared war against Great Britain. From this period may be dated his first actual encounter with an



enemy. Upon the character of this enemy a few words may be proper in this place.

During the long struggle between the French and English for the ascendancy in the Mississippi valley, the Indians had been anxiously courted by both powers. While they were supplied with European arms, and partially instructed in military science by European officers, no effort appears to have been made to soften their ferocity, or to mitigate the barbarous customs which regarded war less as an act of national policy, than an opportunity of indulging all the worst of individual passions. If lack of discipline in their armies made them less formidable to an equal number of our own troops, their savage disregard of the rights of prisoners, made them terrible to an inferior force. At the time that Captain Taylor was first brought into conflict with the tribes in the region of Fort Harrison, they had been particularly prepared for daring adventures by the encouragement of two chiefs, whose talents would have honoured far nobler followers. These were Tecumseh, and his brother Olliwachica,—better known as the Prophet. For several years it had been the policy and ambition of these men to inflame the Indians of the North-western Territory with fresh animosity against their white neighbours. Both leaders added to the qualities of courage, fortitude, and perseverance, consummate knowledge of the arts by which the savage mind is controlled; and they succeeded in inspiring their inferiors with a religious abhorrence of the whites, more effectual for their ends, than the national jealousy excited by the encroachments of the latter upon their ancient hunting-grounds. At no previous period, therefore, was the spirit of the Indians so fully aroused to the duty—such it was in their view—of exterminating our people, as when they resolved to attack Fort Harrison.

Three months after war with England had been formally declared, they were banded for this purpose. Captain Taylor had some intimations of it, which were confirmed on the 3d of September, by the report of guns in the vicinity of the fort, where two young men were at work in the fields. On the

4th their bodies were discovered by a party sent out in search of them,—the scalped heads bearing too apparent proof of Indian hands. This incident added to the vigilance of Captain Taylor, and he made every effort for defence compatible with his limited means. The whole force under his command was about fifty men, of whom about two-thirds were invalids. He himself was just recovering from a fever. The Indians were aware of his weakness, but still preferred the exercise, in some degree, of their native cunning, to the hazard of an open attack. For this purpose a deputation of the Prophet's party came to the fort on the evening of the 4th, bearing a white flag, and affecting peaceable intentions. Captain Taylor was not deceived by this attempt to lessen his caution. He inspected the arms of the men, served out 16 rounds of cartridges to each, and made other dispositions of his meagre resources to guard against surprise and sustain an assault. His force was so small that a sufficient number of sentinels could not be posted to protect the whole extent of the outworks, but the officer of the guard was ordered to make the tour of the inside through the night.

With these precautions the commander, and that portion of his little band not on the watch, retired to rest. But an hour before midnight they were aroused by the report of a musket. Taylor sprang up from his brief sleep, and found his savage enemies upon him. On their approach, the sentinels had precipitately retired within the house, and it was discovered that the lower building was already fired by the Indians. The situation of the garrison was now one of extreme peril, the alternative of death by fire or savage arms appearing imminent. The young captain, however, maintained his composure, and while he directed one party to carry buckets of water to extinguish the flames, encouraged another in their efforts to repel the assailants. It chanced that the fire was first communicated to the store-room, which contained a quantity of whiskey. This was soon in a blaze, which reached the roof and defied every effort to suppress it. Meanwhile a host of savages, who, under cover of a very dark night, had previously approached close

to the house, maintained the attack, yelling furiously in anticipation of their triumph, which it seemed almost impossible to avert. But Taylor, not despairing even in this emergency, ordered the roofs of a portion of the buildings to be torn off, and by keeping that which remained continually wet, succeeded in restricting the fire to the apartments where it originated.

Animated by their leader, the men, who at first shrank from the unequal contest, kept up a steady discharge of musketry upon the assailants, who, during seven hours, abated no effort to carry the fort. In this protracted attack, only three of the garrison were killed and three wounded, while it was apparent that the Indians suffered severely from their exposed position. At six o'clock, on the morning of the 5th, dispirited by their loss, and abandoning the hope of wearying resistance at once so resolute and effective, they retired from the spot, after destroying all the provisions of the post, and killing or driving off the horses and cattle.

The account of this affair, given to General Harrison, in a letter dated the 10th of September, 1812, being the first despatch from Taylor's pen, is appropriately inserted in this place. It has the unaffected spirit, if not the severe style, of his more mature productions. The following is an extract:—

“On Thursday evening, 3d instant, after retreat beating, four guns were heard to fire in the direction where two young men, (citizens who resided here,) were making hay, about four hundred yards distant from the fort. I was immediately impressed with an idea that they were killed by the Indians, as the Miamies or Weas had that day informed me that the Prophet's party would soon be here for the purpose of commencing hostilities; and that they had been directed to leave this place, which they were about to do. I did not think it prudent to send out at that late hour of the night, to see what had become of them, and their not coming convinced me that I was right in my conjecture. I waited until eight o'clock next morning, when I sent out a corporal with a small party to find them, if



it could be done without running too much risk of being drawn into an ambuscade. He soon sent back to inform me, that he had found them both killed, and wished to know my further orders: I sent the cart and oxen, had them brought in and buried. They had been shot with two balls, scalped, and cut in the most shocking manner. Late in the evening of the 4th instant, old Joseph Lenar, and between thirty and forty Indians, arrived from the Prophet's town, with a white flag; among whom were about ten women, and the men were composed of chiefs of the different tribes that compose the Prophet's party.

"A Shawnee man that spoke good English, informed me that old Lenar intended to speak to me next morning, and try to get something to eat. After retreat beating, I examined the men's arms, and found them all in good order, and completed their cartridges to sixteen rounds per man. As I had not been able to mount a guard of more than six privates, and two non-commissioned officers for some time past, and sometimes part of them every other day, from the unhealthiness of the company, I had not conceived my force adequate to the defence of this post, should it be vigorously attacked, for some time past. As I had just recovered from a very severe attack of the fever, I was not able to be up much through the night.

"After tattoo, I cautioned the guard to be vigilant, and ordered one of the non-commissioned officers, as the sentinel could not see every part of the garrison, to walk around on the inside during the night, to prevent the Indians taking any advantage of us, provided they had any intention of attacking us. About eleven o'clock, I was awakened by the firing of one of the sentinels; I sprung up, ran out, and ordered the men to their posts, when my orderly sergeant (who had charge of the upper block-house) called out that the Indians had fired the lower block-house, which contained the property of the contractors, which was deposited in the lower part, (the upper part having been assigned to a corporal and ten privates as an alarm post.) The guns had begun to fire pretty smartly from



both sides. I directed the buckets to be got ready, and water brought from the well, and the fire extinguished immediately, as it was perceivable at that time ; but from debility, or some other cause, the men were very slow in executing my orders ; the word fire, appeared to throw the whole of them into confusion ; and by the time they had got the water, and broken open the door, the fire had unfortunately communicated to a quantity of whiskey, (the *stock* having *licked* several holes through the lower part of the building, after the salt that was stored there, through which they had introduced the fire, without being discovered, as the night was very dark,) and in spite of every exertion we could make use of, in less than a minute it ascended to the roof, and baffled every effort we could make to extinguish it.

“ As that block-house adjoined the barracks that made part of the fortifications, most of the men immediately gave themselves up for lost, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting my orders executed ; and, sir—what from the raging of the fire—the yelling and howling of several hundred Indians—the cries of nine women and children (a part soldiers’ and a part citizens’ wives, who had taken shelter in the fort)—and a desponding of so many of the men, which was worse than all—I can assure you that my feelings were very unpleasant ; and, indeed, there were not more than ten or fifteen men able to do anything at all, the others being sick or convalescent ; and to add to our other misfortunes, two of our stoutest men jumped the pickets and left. But my presence of mind did not for a moment forsake me. I saw by throwing off part of the roof that joined the block-house that was on fire, and keeping the end perfectly wet, the whole row of buildings might be saved, and leave only an entrance of eighteen or twenty feet for the Indians to enter, after the house was consumed ; and that a temporary breast-work might be formed to prevent their entering even there. I convinced the men that this could be accomplished, and it appeared to inspire them with new life ; and never did men act with more firmness or desperation. Those

that were able (while others kept up a constant fire from the upper block-house and the two bastions) mounted the roofs of the houses, with Doctor Clark at their head, (who acted with the greatest firmness and presence of mind, the whole time the attack lasted, which was seven hours,) under a shower of bullets, and in less than a moment threw off as much of the roof as was necessary. This was done, with one man killed, and two wounded, and I am in hopes neither of them dangerously. The man that was killed was a little deranged, and did not get off of the house as soon as directed, or he would not have been hurt; and although the barracks were several times in a blaze, and an immense quantity of fire against them, the men used such exertion, that they kept it under; and, before day, raised a temporary breast-work as high as a man's head. Although the Indians continued to pour in a heavy fire of ball, and an innumerable quantity of arrows, during the whole time the attack lasted, in every part of the parade, I had but one other man killed—nor any other wounded inside the fort—and he lost his life by being too anxious; he got into one of the *gallies* in the bastions, and fired over the pickets, and called out to his comrades that he had killed an Indian, and neglecting to stoop down in an instant, he was shot.

“One of the men that jumped the pickets, returned an hour before day, and running up towards the gate, begged for God's sake for it to be opened. I suspected it to be a stratagem of the Indians to get in, as I did not recollect the voice; I directed the men in the bastion where I happened to be to shoot him, let him be who he would, and one of them fired at him, but fortunately he ran up the other bastion, where they knew his voice, and Doctor Clark directed him to lie close to the pickets, behind an empty barrel that happened to be there, and at daylight I had him let in. His arm was broken in a most shocking manner, which he says was done by the Indians, which I suppose was the cause of his returning. I think it probable that he will not recover. The other they caught about one hundred and thirty yards from the garrison, and

cut him all to pieces. After keeping up a constant fire until about six o'clock the next morning, which we began to return with some effect, after daylight they removed out of reach of our guns. A party of them drove up the horses that belonged to the citizens here, and as they could not catch them very readily, shot the whole of them in our sight, as well as a number of their hogs. They drove off the whole of the cattle, which amounted to sixty-five head, as well as the public oxen.

I had the vacancy filled up before night (which was made by the burning of the block-house) with a strong row of pickets, which I got by pulling down the guard-house. We lost the whole of our provisions, but must make out to live upon green corn, until we can get a supply, which I am in hopes will not be long. I believe the whole of the Miamies or Weas were among the Prophet's party, as one chief gave his orders in that language, which resembled Stone Eater's voice, and I believe Negro Legs was there likewise. A Frenchman here understands their different languages; and several of the Miamies or Weas that have been frequently here were recognised by the Frenchman and soldiers next morning.

"The Indians suffered smartly, but were so numerous as to take off all that were shot. They continued with us until the next morning, but made no further attempt on the fort, nor have we seen anything more of them since. I have delayed informing you of my situation, as I did not like to weaken the garrison, and I looked for some person from Vincennes, and none of my men were acquainted with the woods, and therefore I would either have to take the road or river, which I was fearful was guarded by small parties of Indians, who would not dare attack a company of rangers that was on a scout. But being disappointed, I have at length determined to send a couple of my men by water, and am in hopes they will arrive safe. I think it would be best to send the provisions under a pretty strong escort, as the Indians may attempt to prevent their coming. If you carry on an expedition against the Prophet this fall, you ought to be well provided with everything,

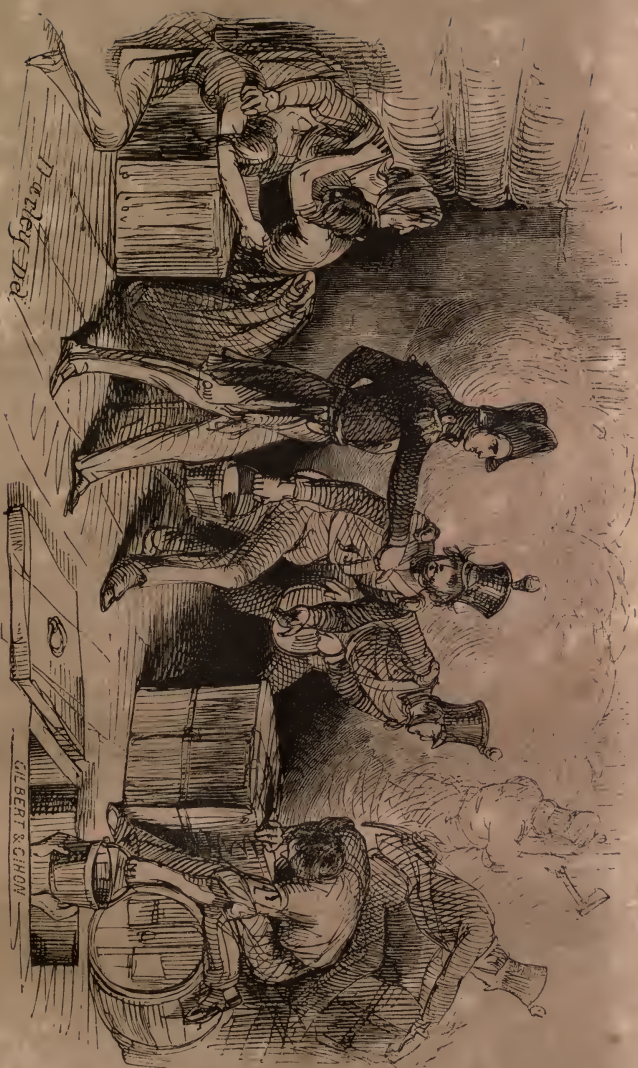


as you may calculate on having every inch of ground disputed, that they can defend with advantage."

Such is the modest account which Taylor gave of an achievement, which, however insignificant compared with the operations of large armies, required the highest degree of physical courage, and the heroic firmness which imparts its quality to other spirits. In the open plain and in the broad sunlight,—in the grand movements of thousands of serried troops, and the steady glitter of their arms—in the cheering peal of trumpet and drum, and the waving of bright banners—in all this there is something to awaken courage in the most sluggish heart, and to prove at once to the warrior the honour of triumph, of wounds or of death, in a cause which brings hosts into conflict. But far stronger is the nerve, far sterner the purpose, which while the howl of infuriate barbarians arouses the midnight sleeper, can sustain him in the terrible moment when the flames, raging around his shelter, threaten to drive him into the less fortunate embrace of his merciless enemies. It was in such a scene as this, his first experience in warfare, that Taylor evinced the calmness, the energy, the hope against mighty odds, which in a later and larger field of action inspired one of his followers to exclaim, as if he were uttering a moral axiom, "Taylor never surrenders!" At Fort Harrison, four hundred savages fell suddenly upon his petty band, less than a twentieth their number, and after a fierce affray of seven hours, left the field discomfited. With such a beginning of his glorious career, should the sequel of Buena Vista be regarded with surprise?

The failure of their enterprise against Fort Harrison mortified and disheartened the Indians, and they abandoned for the time any further attempts against it. The garrison, however, was ignorant of their feelings or intentions, and as a renewal of the attack was reasonably apprehended, its vigilance was not abated. The despatch cited above was entrusted to two men, who attempted to descend the river to Vincennes, but the Indians being on the alert, and keeping up fires on the banks through the night, obliged the bearers to return. In





DEFENCE OF FORT HARRISON.



this emergency, Captain Taylor again addressed Governor Harrison, and sent his messengers by land. These were successful. The letter was in these terms:

“I wrote you on the 10th instant, giving you an account of the attack on this place, as well as my situation, which account I attempted to send by water, but the two men whom I despatched in a canoe after night, found the river so well guarded, that they were obliged to return. The Indians had built a fire on the bank of the river, a short distance below the garrison, which gave them an opportunity of seeing any craft that might attempt to pass, and were waiting with a canoe ready to intercept it. I expect the fort, as well as the road to Vincennes, is as well or better watched than the river. But my situation compels me to make one other attempt by land, and my orderly sergeant, with one other man, sets out to-night, with strict orders to avoid the road in the daytime, and depend entirely on the woods, although neither of them has ever been to Vincennes by land, nor do they know anything of the country; but I am in hopes they will reach you in safety. I send them with great reluctance from their ignorance of the woods. I think it very probable there is a large party of Indians way-laying the road between this and Vincennes, likely about the Narrows, for the purpose of intercepting any party that may be coming to this place, as the cattle they got here will supply them plentifully with provisions for some time to come.”

Immediately on the receipt of this communication, a large force, under the command of General Hopkins, was sent to the relief of the garrison, then reduced to the extremest need, by sickness, fatigue, and the loss of provisions.

The conduct of Taylor at Fort Harrison was not overlooked by his superior officers, by the public, or by the government. General Hopkins, in a letter to the Governor of Kentucky, said of him:—“The firm and almost unparalleled defence of Fort Harrison by Captain Zachary Taylor, has raised for him a fabric of character not to be effaced by eulogy.” The singular force and refinement of this commendation are as honourable to the writer as to the subject of it. An ardent response



to the sentiment was given by the whole country, and the President afforded a more satisfactory proof of its justice, by conferring upon Taylor the rank of Major by brevet—the oldest instance in the service of this species of promotion.

Pending the arrival of Hopkins' command at Fort Harrison, the Indians continued their depredations upon the peaceful inhabitants of the neighbourhood, destroying their houses and farms, and carrying on the war in their usual relentless mode, irrespective of age or sex in the objects of their attacks. Decisive measures were necessary to arrest these atrocities, and an expedition was accordingly planned by General Hopkins against the Indian villages in the Peoria country. The march commenced in the middle of October, but was suddenly ended by the insubordination of the volunteers composing the force. This spirit was partially manifest on the fourth day, but on the fifth it was beyond control. The Indians had set fire to the prairie-grass, and a violent wind drove the flames in the direction of the camp, which was saved with difficulty.

Discontent ripened from this cause into alarm. At a council of officers, convened by General Hopkins, he offered to proceed on the expedition, if followed by only five hundred men. But the voices of all the volunteers were against him, and their steps were accordingly retraced. The enterprise, however, was not altogether fruitless. The Indians, alarmed by the approach of so large a force, collected their warriors to oppose it, leaving their villages unprotected. In this condition, they were attacked by a detachment under Colonel Russell, and destroyed. In the following month, General Hopkins undertook a second expedition, directed against the Prophet's and Winnebago Town, in which Major Taylor took part, and received the official commendations of the general. Several skirmishes occurred, in some of which our troops suffered severely. They succeeded in achieving their main objects, devastating the enemy's country, and destroying their settlements. The winter forced both parties into a cessation of active hostilities. From this time, to the close of the war with Great Britain, Major Taylor was engaged in the same vicinity, ac-



completing the purposes of the government with unremitting vigilance. No further opportunity occurred of signalizing his special talents; but he earned with others the distinction of reducing the Indians, for the time, to terms of peace, and of establishing among the white settlers security from their incursions.

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## CHAPTER II.

Injustice to Army Officers—Taylor's Resignation and Reinstatement—Various Services from 1816 to 1832—Anecdote of his Habits—Promoted to a Colonelcy—Black Hawk War—Battle of Bad-Axe—Gen. Atkinson's Despatch—Anecdote of Taylor—Services until 1836.

THE restoration of peace was made the occasion by government of signal injustice to many officers of the army. Promotions earned by good service during the war were nullified when its exigencies ceased. Among the victims of this policy was Major Taylor,—certainly one of the last who should have been selected for a blow so unworthy. He was reduced to the rank of captain, and deprived alike of the reward and the honour earned by extraordinary talent and devotion to duty. Although his modesty—so well illustrated in later years—would at any time have shrunk from claiming preferment, yet his self-respect forbade submission to an indignity, implying the absence of common desert. With this feeling he resolved to quit a service, in which fidelity seemed to be regarded only in emergencies, and forgotten when no longer required. He accordingly resigned his commission and returned to the more grateful care of his family. His friends, however, were not content to witness calmly either his resignation or the cause of it, and their influence was powerfully exercised with the administration in his behalf. The result was that in the course of a year he was reinstated by President Madison, and con-

sented again to leave his home and its interests for the labours of a profession, the dangers of which in war are preferable to its monotony in peace.

In 1816, immediately after his restoration to his former rank, Major Taylor was ordered to Green Bay, and remained in command of that post for two years. Returning to Kentucky, he passed a year with his family, and was then ordered to join Colonel Russell at New Orleans. Except during a temporary absence, when recalled by the illness of his wife, he continued in the south for several years, generally engaged in some active duty. One of his labours was the opening of a military road, and another the erection of Fort Jesup—the latter in 1822. In 1824 he was engaged in Louisville in the recruiting service, and in the latter part of that year was ordered to Washington. He was appointed a member of the board for the planning and erection of Jefferson Barracks. On the 20th of April, 1819, Taylor received the commission of a Lieutenant Colonel. The following year he again returned to the south, but was recalled in 1826, to sit as a member of a board of officers of the Army and of the Militia, convened by Secretary Barbour, to consider and propose a system for the organization and improvement of the militia of the United States. General Scott was president of this commission. The other members, besides Lieutenant Colonel Taylor, were Brigadier General Eustis, Lieutenant Colonel Cutler, Major Nourse of the Army, and Major General Cadwalader, Adjutant General Damil, and Adjutant General Sumner of the Militia. To the last-mentioned gentleman the writer is indebted for an account of the proceedings of this board.

Its discussions were long and earnest, but a report was finally agreed upon, embracing several important provisions. It is unnecessary to introduce here an abstract of this document, but it is proper to state that Taylor—then Lieutenant Colonel—was strenuous in maintaining the militia strictly as citizen soldiery, in opposition to the views of some older officers in the board, who would have invested this body with

more of the character of a regular army. The report, having been drawn by General Scott, was adopted on motion of Lieutenant Colonel Taylor, and was approved in Congress. Owing, however, to want of proper attention, a bill based upon it was suffered to slumber for some time in Committee on the Militia, and was finally forgotten.

The duties of Taylor were subsequently resumed upon the north-western frontier, a field on which, soon afterwards, he again met an Indian enemy and sustained the reputation won in his first contest with him. Five years of peace, however, preceded this occasion,—years not idly spent by the man who seemed unconsciously preparing himself in every department of his profession for the splendid achievements of his later days. A writer in the *Literary World* thus mentions him: “As plain Lieut. Colonel Taylor I have often seen him putting his men through the battalion drill on the northern banks of the Wisconsin, in the depth of February. This would seem only characteristic of the man who has since proved himself equally “Rough and Ready” under the scorching sun of the tropics. But, looking back through long years to many a pleasant hour spent in the well-selected library of the post which Colonel Taylor then commanded, we recur now with singular interest to the agreeable conversations held in the room which was the Colonel’s favourite resort, amid the intervals of duty.” And the same chronicler of his severe habits of discipline and study continues: “Nor will the reader think these personal reminiscences impertinent, when we add that our object in recurring to them here is simply to mention that, remembering alike the wintry drill and the snug book-room, Taylor’s hardihood—the idea of which now so readily attaches to his sobriquet of *Rough and Ready*—would certainly not then have struck a stranger as more characteristic than his liberal-minded intelligence.”

In 1832 Taylor was promoted to the rank of Colonel. During the previous year, the difficulties between the white settlers near Rock River, and the Sac Indians under the celebrated chief Black Hawk, had been fomented by bad and



interested men to a point of open hostilities. It must be equally as painful to any American historian, as it would be unnecessary for the author of this biography, to recite the events which brought about the contest known as "the Black Hawk war." If, in former periods and in other places, the implacable aversion of the Indians to the peaceful encroachments of our people, induced the latter to resort to arms and the work of destruction as acts of simple self-defence, the same reason cannot be asserted for the war against Black Hawk and his unfortunate tribe. Once commenced, however, the security of all parties demanded its termination by the most vigorous measures.

Black Hawk, whose flags of truce had been on two different occasions fired upon, and the bearers killed, defeated on the 14th of May, 1832, near Rock River, a large number of mounted volunteers, who fled precipitately before a small band of the brave chief. The force of the latter was vastly exaggerated by the fears of the routed troops, and alarm spread through the state of Illinois. General Atkinson, then commanding in the north-west, had his head-quarters at Dixon's Ferry, which he immediately proceeded to fortify. The governor of Illinois at the same time called out a fresh body of mounted volunteers, and the secretary of war ordered about one thousand regulars to the scene of action. General Scott then took the command of the army, and conducted the campaign. For three months a contest characterized by the worst acts of border ferocity was maintained. The Indians murdered many frontier families, and committed bold depredations in the face of our troops. In their turn they suffered in several skirmishes, but not to the extent of disheartening them. A party under Black Hawk attacked the fort at Buffalo Grove, and although they failed in carrying it, yet they killed several men, and afterwards defeated a detachment of volunteers who came to its rescue.

General Atkinson arrived on the fourth of July with an army of twenty-five hundred men, including four hundred regulars under Col. Taylor, at Lake Coshconing, in the neighbourhood



of which the Indians had collected. The latter were reduced, at the time, to the greatest extremity for want of provisions, their fighting men being encumbered with women and children and their moveable property, as they had fled from their villages with no means of immediate subsistence. From Lake Coshoning, an extension of Rock River, they were pursued towards Fort Winnebago by two brigades of mounted volunteers, under General Dodge, and overtaken on the banks of the Wisconsin. In this flight they suffered dreadfully from fatigue, famine and slaughter.

Late in July, General Atkinson crossed the Wisconsin River and ordered the pursuit of the Indians. For this service thirteen hundred men, among whom were Taylor's regulars, were selected. They set forth immediately. The way was through a primitive wilderness, before untrodden by any body of white men. With forced speed the march was pressed over rocks and mountains, through woods and waters, often almost impassable for horses, and continually exhausting to the men. At last the enemy was overtaken on the Bad Axe, near the junction of the Mississippi and the Iowa. A battle, desperate on the part of the Indians, ensued, in which they were wholly routed, many falling by our arms, others perishing in the river, and the rest dispersing or submitting themselves prisoners. The chief, Black Hawk, who then escaped, was in the course of the month surrendered by some of his faithless allies, and with his capture ended the war. The following is General Atkinson's official account of the battle.

“Head Quarters, First Artillery Corps, North-western Army.

“Prairie des Chiens, Augt. 25, 1832.

“SIR: I have the honour to report to you that I crossed the Wisconsin on the 27th and 28th ultimo, with a select body of troops, consisting of the regulars under Col. Taylor, four hundred in number, part of Henry's, Posey's and Alexander's brigades, amounting in all to 1300 men, and immediately fell upon the trail of the enemy, and pursued it by a forced march, through a mountainous and difficult country, till the morning

of the 2d inst., when we came up with his main body on the left bank of the Mississippi, nearly opposite the mouth of the Iowa, which we attacked, defeated and dispersed, with a loss on his part of about a hundred and fifty men killed, thirty-nine women and children taken prisoners—the precise number could not be ascertained, as the greater portion was slain after being forced into the river. Our loss in killed and wounded, which is stated below, is very small in comparison with the enemy, which may be attributed to the enemy's being forced from his positions by a rapid charge at the commencement, and throughout the engagement—the remnant of the enemy, cut up and disheartened, crossed to the opposite side of the river, and has fled into the interior, with a view, it is supposed, of joining Keokuk and Wapello's bands of Sacs and Foxes.

“The horses of the volunteer troops being exhausted by long marches, and the regular troops without shoes, it was not thought advisable to continue the pursuit; indeed a stop to the further effusion of blood seemed to be called for, till it might be ascertained if the enemy would surrender.

“It is ascertained from our prisoners, that the enemy lost in the battle of the Ouisconsin sixty-eight killed and a very large number wounded; his whole loss does not fall short of three hundred;—after the battle on the Ouisconsin, those of the enemy's women and children, and some who were dismounted, attempted to make their escape by descending that river, but judicious measures being taken by Captain Loomis and Lieut. Street, Indian agent, thirty-two women and children and four men have been captured, and some fifteen men killed by the detachment under Lieut. Ritner.

“The day after the battle on this river, I fell down with the regular troops to this place by water, and the mounted men will join us to-day. It is now my purpose to direct Keokuk to demand a surrender of the remaining principal men of the hostile party, which, from the large number of women and children we hold prisoners, I have every reason to believe will be complied with. Should it not, they should be pursued and subdued, a step Maj. Gen. Scott will take upon his arrival.

"I cannot speak too highly of the brave conduct of the regular and volunteer forces engaged in the last battle and the fatiguing march that preceded it; as soon as the reports of officers of the brigades and corps are handed in, they shall be submitted with further remarks.

"5 killed, 2 wounded, 6th inf.

2 do. 5th inf.

1 captain, 5 privates, Dodge's Bat. mounted.

1 Lieut. 6 privates, Henry's.

1 private wounded, Alexander's.

1 private do. Posey's.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servant, H. ATKINSON,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A.

"Maj. Gen. Macomb, Com. in Chief, Washington."

Black Hawk and his fellow prisoners were confided to the charge of Col. Taylor, who conveyed them to the Jefferson Barracks, where they arrived about the middle of September. On this, as on every other occasion, however trying, Taylor shrank from no obligation, the result of his position as an officer, carrying out the orders of his superiors. A portion of his task could not have been less painful to his feelings than difficult of execution. But it was accomplished promptly and thoroughly, in a manner worthy of himself.

The writer in the Literary World, already quoted, relates the following anecdote of Taylor, while in pursuit of Black Hawk. If slightly erroneous in any particular, it is at least illustrative of the man.

"Some time after Stillman's defeat by Black Hawk's band, Taylor, marching with a large body of volunteers and a handful of regulars in pursuit of the hostile Indian force, found himself approaching Rock River, then asserted by many to be the true north-western boundary of Illinois. The volunteers, as Taylor was informed, would refuse to cross the stream. They were militia, they said, called out for the defence of the state, and it was unconstitutional to order them to march beyond its frontier into the Indian country. Taylor thereupon halted



his command, and encamped within the acknowledged boundaries of Illinois. He would not, as the relator of the story said, budge an inch further without orders. He had already driven Black Hawk out of the state, but the question of crossing Rock River seemed hugely to trouble his ideas of integrity to the constitution on one side, and military expediency on the other. During the night, however, orders came, either from General Scott or General Atkinson, for him to follow up Black Hawk to the last. The quietness of the regular colonel, meanwhile, had rather encouraged the mutinous militia to bring their proceedings to a head. A sort of town-meeting was called upon the prairie, and Taylor invited to attend. After listening some time very quietly to the proceedings, it became Rough and Ready's turn to address the chair. 'He had heard,' he said, 'with much pleasure the views which several speakers had expressed of the independence and dignity of each private American citizen. He felt that all gentlemen there present were his equals—in reality, he was persuaded that many of them would in a few years be his superiors, and perhaps, in the capacity of members of congress, arbiters of the fortune and reputation of humble servants of the republic like himself. He expected them to obey them as interpreters of the will of the people; and the best proof he could give that he would obey them, was now to observe the orders of those whom the people had already put in the places of authority, to which many gentlemen around him justly aspired. In plain English, gentlemen and fellow-citizens, the word has been passed on to me from Washington to follow Black Hawk, and to take you with me as soldiers. I mean to do both. There are the flat-boats drawn up on the shore, and here are Uncle Sam's men drawn up behind you on the prairie.' ” It is unnecessary to state the effect of this appeal.

After the Black Hawk war, Col. Taylor was for a short time in Louisville, and was thence ordered to Prairie du Chien, to the command of Fort Crawford, a work which had been erected under his superintendence. Here he remained until 1836, when his services were required in the Seminole war in Florida.



To that field he immediately repaired, although he might with propriety have asked of the government a season of repose, having very rarely enjoyed the ease and tranquillity of home during a period of more than twenty-five years.

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### CHAPTER III.

Destiny of the Indian Races—Causes of the Florida War—Osceola—Commencement of the Florida War—Troops in Florida—Massacre of Dade's Command—Volunteers in Florida—Taylor ordered to the Seat of War—Marches against the Indians—Difficulties of the March—Battle of Okeechobee—Gallantry of the Troops—The Killed and Wounded—Taylor's Account of the Battle—Its Results—Taylor applauded by the Country—Promoted to a Brigadier Generalship—Appointed to the chief Command in Florida—Use of Blood-hounds—Authority for the Use—Reasons for the same—Indian Murders, several Accounts—Their Perfidy—Taylor vindicated—He retires from the Command in Florida.

It is a fact, which speculative philanthropy seems no longer inclined to dispute, that the aboriginal races of this continent must decline and become extinct in the presence of our own civilized people. The minds and the habits of the white and the red man are not less irreconcilable than the colour of their skins. It appears idle, therefore, to mourn over the inevitable fate of the latter, or to regard as criminal the progress of the former, when of necessity it is attended with the invasion and occupation of new territory. Justice and humanity may modify the apparent hardship of the Indian, banished from the land of his fathers and bereft of the rude privileges which endear it to him. But no ingenuity can devise a code, which will secure his national independence and his barbarous usages, when surrounded by a civilized community. His sovereignty under such circumstances must cease. Nor this alone. He must also recede before the advance of a superior in knowledge and virtue, as well as in power. His only temporary hope of retaining the semblance of freedom, and of the personal and civil customs which are a part of his nature, is to retire beyond

the boundaries of his better neighbour. And as these boundaries extend, he must still retire; losing strength with every movement, destroying the associations which were the only safeguard of his political and religious system, and by certain decay wasting away sooner or later from the face of the earth.

The Seminole Indians, occupying the region of Florida, were required by the federal government to emigrate to lands appropriated for their occupation on the west of the Mississippi River. The requisition may have been a little premature—their vicinity to the white settlements may not at the time have been wholly incompatible with the security and comfort of the latter. But the period of their removal could not have been long postponed, and had they been well advised they would have immediately yielded to the proposition of the government. No difficulty, in fact, was anticipated in carrying it out. The local newspapers gave assurances of the readiness of the Indians to depart. Some unfairness, however, which it is needless to examine here, may have been practised in the negotiations with them. Their jealousy and pride were excited, and the task, which at first appeared so easy and certain of execution, proved to be one which baffled the diplomacy of cabinets and the power of armies, and cost the nation tens of hundreds of lives and tens of millions of treasure.

A treaty with the Seminoles for their removal was concluded at Payne's Landing, in Florida, in May, 1832, allowing three years for its fulfilment. The government was first advised in 1834 of their disinclination to depart. Yet as late as the spring of 1835, there was in Florida a confidence in the public mind, regarding the calm dispositions of the Seminoles, unclouded by a thought of the terrible storm which so soon afterwards desolated its homes, and menaced for a time even its capital with destruction. The St. Augustine Herald of that period, emphatically denied that there was any foundation for the reports of difficulties with the Indians,—adding this assurance of their harmless character: "The Seminole of the present day is a different being from the warlike son of the forest,

when the tribe was numerous and powerful. No trouble in the removal of it is anticipated." Yet before the close of the year, how sadly was this declaration falsified! A chief had appeared among this tribe destined to hold a place in history with Philip of Pokanokee, Tecumseh, and Black Hawk. This was Osceola. Hatred for the whites had long been a smothered fire in his heart, and now the moment had arrived when it burst forth with implacable fury. By inheritance, Osceola enjoyed no title or distinction among the Seminoles. He derived his origin from the Creeks, and had affected, until upwards of thirty years of age, the more pacific feelings of that people. But when the time for throwing off disguise appeared to have matured, he used among the more southern tribes, the influence obtained by his talents and courage. Declaring openly against the United States' government and citizens, he supplanted the legitimate chiefs of the Seminoles, and even put to death those who exhibited a desire for peaceful measures. Relentless in his enmities, profound in his purposes of vengeance, reckless of danger, deliberate, cunning, and ambitious, he acquired perfect ascendancy over his red brethren, and when he gave the signal war-cry, murder, rapine and fire told of their dreadful response, from the everglades of central Florida to the very walls of St. Augustine. Consternation seized the quiet inhabitants, and the bolder spirits, aroused alike by grief and rage, snatched up their arms and banded together, some to protect their homes, others to pursue with terrible justice the foe who would spare nought that was dear to them.

The United States' troops, at this time, in Florida numbered between five and six hundred men, stationed at several posts, —General Clinch being in command. On the 23d of December, a detachment of two companies, amounting to one hundred and twelve officers and men, under Major Dade, marched from Fort Brooke for the purpose of joining the commanding general. On their route, anticipating no danger, they were surprised by a large body of the Indians; and, after a resistance, begun with cool bravery and protracted with fierce despair,



the unfortunate party was utterly destroyed, with the exception of three men, who, exhausted with many wounds, reached the fort to tell the fate of their companies. From this memorable day, open war commenced. Many Creek warriors joined the Seminoles, and the government found it necessary to send in succession its most able generals into the field. From time to time, on their requisition, the gallant men of Louisiana, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Missouri, promptly took up arms to aid their suffering brethren of Florida. On the part of the Indians, occasional success added vigour to their bold and cruel enterprises.

In this state of affairs, Colonel Taylor was ordered to the seat of war. An opportunity was not long wanting for a new exhibition of his perseverance in discovering, and his skill in fighting, an Indian enemy. General Jesup had then command of the army in Florida, and, like his predecessors in the office, had made fruitless efforts to bring the Seminoles to terms of treaty. The hope had been entertained, that a delegation of the Cherokees, acting as mediators, might be able to convince them of the ultimate folly of opposing the wishes of our government, and the immediate advantages of laying down their arms and acceding to its proposals. The intercession of these friendly Indians, however, was unavailing with the obstinate and ferocious dispositions of the resisting tribes, and no choice was left between absolute concession to their demands, or rigorous enforcement of our own. Active hostilities, which during two years had abated at intervals, were, therefore, determined upon ; and, in December, 1837, Colonel Taylor received orders to seek out any portion of the enemy, wherever to be found, and to destroy or capture his forces.

On the 19th and 20th of December, 1837, the force under Colonel Taylor, amounting to about eleven hundred, officers and men, left Fort Gardner, in pursuance of the instructions of General Jesup. The country presented all the usual obstacles to the march of an army, which are found in the narrow peninsula of Florida, and which had baffled the plans of many former expeditions. A wet and soft soil, matted with



rank herbage, which clogged the feet at every step, and served as an impenetrable screen to a lurking foe ; the deep and slimy beds and the waters of many streams ; the dense thickets of the cypress, the palmetto, and other luxuriant underwood,—such was the surface over which Taylor led his troops to discover and cope with the savages. The latter, anticipating his approach, and perfectly familiar with the labyrinths and natural fastnesses of their own country, had retired to one of its strongest and most inaccessible places, prepared to give him battle.

The commander and his followers were not ignorant of the hazard and toil of their enterprise. Many were the brave spirits who had perished in similar duty,—a duty in which failure had often brought reproach ; and in which success, achieved with grievous wounds and death, had been unhonoured by the applause of the nation, unrewarded by the care of the government. Regardless of all this, so crushing to the soldier's energies, Taylor led on his generous little army. Never had worthy chief more worthy aid. The noble and brave Lieutenant Colonel Davenport, who like him had been in the border struggles of the north-west ; the firm and daring Lieut. Cols. Thompson and Foster, of the army, the latter schooled in the wars with England and on the frontier, and the magnanimous Col. Gentry of the Missouri volunteers, divided the commands under him. The banks of the Kissimmee River marked the course of the march, which for five days was laboriously pursued. At times the long clotted grass of the swamps wholly arrested the advance of the horses, and the men only finished a wearisome progress through these obstacles, to plunge into the stagnant waters of low bottom lands. Occasionally a straggling Indian or the individuals of a family were captured, who served to assure Taylor that he was approaching the stronghold of their people. On the fifth day after leaving Fort Gardner he reached a cypress swamp, which bore the marks of the late presence of a large body of the enemy. Taylor disposed his army in order of battle, and advanced expecting to find him. But the swamp was passed

without his appearing, and a large prairie disclosed, bounded on its farther side by an extensive hammock. In the latter, according to the report of a prisoner, the Indians were posted. Here, at noon on the 25th, the final preparations were made for the attack.

Gentry's Missouri volunteers and Captain Morgan's "Spies" were formed in an extended line, and ordered to enter the hammock, to attack the enemy, and if repulsed to fall back under cover of the regular troops. The Fourth Infantry, under Lt. Col. Foster, and the Sixth, under Lt. Col. Thompson, formed a second line to support the volunteers. The First Infantry, under Lt. Col. Davenport, was held in reserve. Eager for the action, the troops hurried forward in this order, but at the distance of a quarter of a mile entered a wide slough, which seemed to forbid farther progress. For horses the advance was impossible, and they were abandoned, while the men, buried to their necks in the long tangled grass, and sinking frequently to their waists in slime and water, struggled on to charge the unseen foe. They had proceeded thus but little beyond the edge of the swamp, the volunteers and spies leading in the order assigned them, when suddenly the rustle of the grass and the splash of the water through which they moved, were smothered in the rattle of hundreds of rifles. The savages were close before them, and had reserved their fire until it would be surely answered with the death-cry of many a brave assailant. But the shock for a time was fearlessly sustained, and the volunteers still charged on, until the impetuous commander, cheering them in the front rank, received a fatal shot and fell. Major Sconce, Capt. Childs, Lieutenants Rogers, Haas, and Gordon, staggered under their wounds. The men, discouraged, now gave way and retired from the storm which had swept down their leaders. But the regulars pressed forward through the deep morass, as compact and firm as if the solid ground were beneath them, and only a holiday crowd in front to admire their manoeuvres. On the Sixth Infantry a torrent of bullets was poured, carrying havoc into their files. The dark cool waters beneath them grew







warm and red with their blood, and in the foremost ranks was not a heart but paid its tribute to swell the tide. Their leader, too, the heroic Thompson, regardless of two balls received in the first onset, courted and met death at their head; shouting the charge, and words of encouragement, with his last breath. Still they closed upon their foes, and with every step left behind a fallen chief or comrade. Adjutant Center, Captain Van Swearingen, and Lieut. Brooke perished. Capt. Andrews and Lieuts. Hooper and Walker were wounded, and every inferior officer of five companies in the advance was also killed or disabled, while of one company only four men were uninjured. For more than an hour, before so terrible a fire, the gallant Sixth advanced, and when its leaders were lost, at last retired, but only for a time, to form again and renew the assault. Thrice the enemy wavered and gave ground, and thrice returned to the most desperate conflict ever maintained by their arms.

Meanwhile Lt. Col. Foster led on the Fourth, and finally drove the savages from their position; and being joined by Capt. Noel with the remaining companies of the Sixth, pressed them hotly to their camp on the borders of Lake Okeechobee. Capt. Allen, with two companies, having been detached to the right in the beginning of the action, Lieut. Col. Davenport, with the First Infantry, was ordered, when his advance was perceived, to turn the right flank of the enemy. This movement being executed with brave alacrity, and the enemy seeing the regiment in position, delivered one final volley from their rifles and fled, the three regiments of regulars and a portion of the volunteers following them in every direction, and only abating the pursuit when night closed in upon them.

The force of the Indians amounted to several hundred warriors, and they had so chosen their defensive position as to give the utmost efficiency to their numbers. Their loss was not ascertained. The loss of our troops in this severe and memorable battle, included fourteen officers and one hundred and twenty-four men, killed and wounded, being one-fifth of the whole number engaged. Upon the merits of a victory

gained under such circumstances, and at such cost of life and blood, what comment can be made to enhance respect for the dauntless spirits who won it? We look upon the exhausting march of five days from Fort Gardner, and the previous advance of five weeks to that station, attended with hardships scarcely less appalling, and we ask in admiration, whence was the strength, whence the energy, whence the courage to engage for three hours on ground which scarcely admitted a foothold, and defeat and scatter a foe whom nature had entrenched and desperation animated? Can any answer be found to the question, unless it be in the ability, the valour, the endurance, the inspiring presence of the chief himself? He had led them on the long and arduous march, sharing all their toils and privations, and when they met the enemy, he was seen where the battle strewed the dead around him, calm amid its iron tempest, and giving assurance by his thrilling voice and flashing eye of victory, which, however long it may flutter around his standard, never fails to rest at last upon it.

The contest over, the care of the wounded and the dead was the first thought of the commander. That his humanity may be appreciated, as well as his heroism, through the whole of the trying scenes which have been faintly sketched, it is proper to exhibit his own official narrative.

“Head Quarters, First Brigade, Army south of the Withlacoochee.

“Fort Gardner, January 4, 1838.

“On the 19th ultimo, I received at this place a communication from Major General Jesup, informing me that all hopes of bringing the war to a close by negotiation, through the interference or mediation of the Cherokee delegation, were at an end; Sam Jones, with the Mickasukies, having determined to fight it out to the last, and directing me to proceed with the least possible delay against any portion of the enemy I might hear of within striking distance, and to destroy or capture him.

“After leaving two officers and an adequate force for the protection of my depot, I marched the next morning, with twelve days' rations (my means of transportation not enabling



me to carry more,) with the balance of my command, consisting of Captain Munroe's company of the Fourth artillery, total thirty-five men; the First infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Foster, two hundred and seventy-four; the Sixth infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, two hundred and twenty-one; the Missouri volunteers, one hundred and eighty; Morgan's spies, forty-seven; pioneers, thirty; pontoneers, thirteen; and seventy Delaware Indians, making a force, exclusive of officers, of one thousand and thirty-two men; the greater part of the Shawnees having been detached, and the balance refusing to accompany me, under the pretext that a number of them were sick, and the remainder were without moccasins.

"I moved down the west side of the Kissimmee, in a southeasterly course, towards Lake Istopoga, for the following reasons: 1st. Because I knew a portion of the hostiles were to be found in that direction; 2d. If General Jesup should fall in with the Mickasukies and drive them, they might attempt to elude him by crossing the Kissimmee, from the east to the west side of the peninsula, between this and its entrance into the Okeechobee, in which case I might be near at hand to intercept them; 3d. To overawe and induce such of the enemy who had been making propositions to give themselves up, and who appeared very slow, if not to hesitate in complying with their promises on that head, to surrender at once; and lastly, I deemed it advisable to erect block-houses and a small picket work on the Kissimmee, for a third depot, some thirty or forty miles below this, and obtain a knowledge of the intervening country, as I had no guide who could be relied on, and by this means open a communication with Colonel Smith, who was operating up the Caloosehatchee, or Sangbel river, under my orders.

"Late in the evening of the first day's march, I met the Indian chief Jumper, with his family, and a part of his band, consisting of fifteen men, a part of them with families, and a few negroes, in all sixty-three souls, on his way to give himself up, in conformity to a previous arrangement I had entered

into with him. They were conducted by Captain Parks and a few Shawnees. He (Parks) is an active, intelligent half-breed, who is at the head of the friendly Indians, both Shawnees and Delawares, and who I had employed to arrange and bring in Jumper and as many of his people as he could prevail on to come in. We encamped that night near the same spot; and the next morning, having ordered Captain Parks to join me and take command of the Delawares, and having despatched Jumper, in charge of some Shawnees, to this place, and so on to Fort Frazier, I continued my march, after having sent forward three friendly Seminoles to gain intelligence as to the position of the enemy.

“About noon the same day, I sent forward one battalion of Gentry’s regiment, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Price, to pick up any stragglers that might fall in his way, to encamp two or three miles in advance of the main force, to act with great circumspection, and to communicate promptly any occurrence that might take place in his vicinity, important for me to know. About 10, P. M., I received a note from the colonel, stating that the three Seminoles sent forward in the morning had returned; that they had been at or near where Alligator had encamped, twelve or fifteen miles in his advance; that he (Alligator) had left there with a part of his family four days before, under the pretext of separating his relations, &c., from the Mickasukies, preparatory to his surrendering with them; that there were several families remaining at the camp referred to, who wished to give themselves up, and would remain there until we took possession of them, unless they were forcibly carried off that night by the Mickasukies, who were encamped at no great distance from them.

“In consequence of this intelligence, after directing Lieutenant Colonel Davenport to follow me early in the morning with the infantry, a little after midnight I put myself at the head of the residue of the mounted men and joined Lieutenant Colonel Price, proceeded on, crossing Istopoga outlet, and soon after daylight took possession of the encampment referred to, where I found the inmates, who had not been disturbed.

They consisted of an old man, and two young ones, and several women and children, amounting in all to twenty-two individuals. The old man informed me that Alligator was very anxious to separate his people from the Mickasukies, who were encamped on the opposite side of the Kissimmee, distant about twenty miles, where they would fight us. I sent him to Alligator to say to him, if he were sincere in his professions, to meet me the next day at the Kissimmee, where the trail I was marching on crossed, and where I should halt.

"As soon as the infantry came up I moved on to the place designated, which I reached late that evening, and where I encamped. About 11 P. M., the old Indian returned, bringing a very equivocal message from Alligator, who, he stated, he had met accidentally; also, that the Mickasukies were still encamped where they had been for some days, and where they were determined to fight us.

"I determined at once on indulging them as soon as practicable. Accordingly, next morning, after laying out a small stockade work for the protection of a future depot, in order to enable me to move with the greatest celerity, I deposited the whole of my heavy baggage, including artillery, &c., and having provisioned the command to include the 26th, after leaving Captain Munroe with his company, the pioneer, pontoneers, with eighty-five sick and disabled infantry, and a portion of the friendly Indians, who alleged that they were unable to march farther, crossed the Kissimmee, taking the old Indian as a guide who had been captured the day before, and who accompanied us with great apparent reluctance, in pursuit of the enemy, and early the next day reached Alligator's encampment, situated on the edge of Cabbage-tree Hammock, in the midst of a large prairie, from the appearance of which, and other encampments in the vicinity, and the many evidences of slaughtered cattle, there must have been several hundred individuals.

"At another small hammock, at no great distance from Alligator's encampment, and surrounded by a swamp, impassable for mounted men, the spies surprised an encampment contain-



ing one old man, four young men, and some women and children. One of the party immediately raised a white flag, when the men were taken possession of, and brought across the swamp to the main body. I proceeded with an interpreter to meet them. They proved to be Seminoles, and professed to be friendly. They stated that they were preparing to come in; they had just slaughtered a number of cattle, and were employed in drying and jerking the same. They also informed me that the Mickasukies, headed by A-vi-a-ka, (Sam Jones,) were some ten or twelve miles distant encamped in a swamp, and were prepared to fight.

“Although I placed but little confidence in their professions of friendship, or their intentions of coming in, yet I had no time to look up their women and children, who had fled and concealed themselves in the swamp, or to have encumbered myself with them in the situation in which I then was. Accordingly, I released the old man, who promised that he would collect all the women and children and take them in to Captain Munroe, at the Kissimmee, the next day. I also dismissed the old man who had acted as guide thus far, supplying his place with the four able warriors who had been captured that morning.

“These arrangements being made, I moved under their guidance for the camp of the Mickasukies. Between two and three, P. M., we reached a very dense cypress swamp, through which we were compelled to pass, and in which our guide informed us we might be attacked. After making the necessary dispositions for battle, it was ascertained that there was no enemy to oppose us. The army crossed over and encamped for the night, it being late. During the passage of the rear, Captain Parks, who was in advance with a few friendly Indians, fell in with two of the enemy's spies, between two and three miles of our camp, one on horseback, the other on foot, and succeeded in capturing the latter. He was an active young warrior, armed with an excellent rifle, fifty balls in his pouch, and an adequate proportion of powder. This Indian confirmed the information which had been previously received from the

other Indians, and, in addition, stated that a large body of Seminoles, headed by John Cohua, (Co-a-coo-chee,) and, no doubt, Alligator, with other chiefs, were encamped five or six miles from us, near the Mickasukies, with a cypress swamp and dense hammock between them and the latter.

“The army moved forward at daylight the next morning, and after marching five or six miles, reached the camp of the Seminoles on the border of another cypress swamp, which must have contained several hundred, and bore evident traces of having been abandoned in a great hurry, as the fires were still burning, and quantities of beef lying on the ground unconsumed.

“Here the troops were again disposed of in order of battle, but we found no enemy to oppose us; and the command was crossed over about 11 A. M., when we entered a large prairie in our front, on which two or three hundred head of cattle were grazing, and a number of Indian ponies. Here another young Indian warrior was captured, armed and equipped as the former. He pointed out a dense hammock on our right, about a mile distant, in which he said the hostiles were situated, and waiting to give us battle.

“At this place the final disposition was made to attack them, which was in two lines, the volunteers under Gentry, and Morgan’s spies, to form the first line in extended order, who were instructed to enter the hammock, and in the event of being attacked and hard pressed, were to fall back in rear of the regular troops, out of reach of the enemy’s fire; the second was composed of the 4th and 6th infantry, who were instructed to sustain the volunteers, the 1st infantry being held in reserve.

“Moving on in the direction of the hammock, after proceeding about a quarter of a mile, we reached the swamp which separated us from the enemy, three-quarters of a mile in breadth, being totally impassable for horses, and nearly so for foot, covered with a thick growth of saw grass, five feet high, and about knee-deep in mud and water, which extended to the left as far as the eye could reach, and to the right to a

part of the swamp and hammock we had just crossed through, ran a deep creek. At the edge of the swamp the men were dismounted, and the horses and baggage left under a suitable guard. Captain Allen was detached with the two companies of mounted infantry to examine the swamp and hammock to the right, and in case he should not find the enemy in that direction, was to return to the baggage, and in the event of his hearing a heavy firing to join me immediately.

“After making these arrangements, I crossed the swamp in the order stated. On reaching the borders of the hammock, the volunteers and spies received a heavy fire from the enemy, which was returned by them for a short time, when their gallant commander, Colonel Gentry, fell, mortally wounded. They mostly broke; and instead of forming in rear of the regulars, as had been directed, they retired across the swamp to their baggage and horses, nor could they again be brought into action as a body, although efforts were made repeatedly by my staff to induce them to do so.

“The enemy, however, were promptly checked and driven back by the 4th and 6th infantry, which in truth might be said to be a moving battery. The weight of the enemy's fire was principally concentrated on five companies of the 6th infantry, which not only stood firm, but continued to advance until their gallant commander, Lieutenant Colonel Thompson, and his adjutant, Lieutenant Center, were killed; and every officer, with one exception, as well as most of the non-commissioned officers, including the serjeant-major and four of the orderly sergeants, killed and wounded of those companies, when that portion of the regiment retired to a short distance and were again formed, one of these companies having but four members left untouched.

“Lieutenant Colonel Foster, with six companies, amounting in all to one hundred and sixty men, gained the hammock in good order, where he was joined by Captain Noel with the two remaining companies of the 6th infantry, and Captain Gentry's volunteers, with a few additional men, continued to drive the enemy for a considerable time, and by a change of



front, separated his line and continued to drive him until he reached the great lake, Okeechobee, which was in the rear of the enemy's position, and on which their encampment extended for more than a mile. As soon as I was informed that Captain Allen was advancing, I ordered the 1st infantry to move to the left, gain the enemy's right flank, and turn it, which order was executed in the promptest manner possible, and as soon as that regiment got in position, the enemy gave one fire and retreated, being pursued by the 1st, 4th, and 6th, and some of the volunteers who had joined them, until near night, and until these troops were nearly exhausted, and the enemy driven in all directions.

"The action was a severe one, and continued from half-past twelve until three P. M., a part of the time very close and severe. We suffered much, having twenty-six killed, and one hundred and twelve wounded, among whom are some of our most valuable officers. The hostiles probably suffered, all things considered, equally with ourselves, they having left ten dead on the ground, besides, doubtless, carrying off more, as is customary with them when practicable.

"As soon as the enemy were completely broken, I turned my attention to taking care of the wounded, to facilitate their removal to my baggage, where I ordered an encampment to be formed. I directed Captain Taylor to cross over to the spot and employ every individual whom he might find there in constructing a small footway across the swamp; this, with great exertions, was completed in a short time after dark, when all the dead and wounded were carried over in litters made for the purpose, with one exception, a private of the 4th infantry, who was killed and could not be found.

"And here I trust I may be permitted to say that I experienced one of the most trying scenes of my life, and he who could have looked on it with indifference, his nerves must have been differently organized from my own. Besides the killed, there lay one hundred and twelve wounded officers and soldiers, who had accompanied me one hundred and forty-five miles, most of the way through an unexplored wilderness,

without guides, who had so gallantly beaten the enemy, under my orders, in his strongest position, and who had to be conveyed back, through swamps and hammocks, from whence we set out, without any apparent means of doing so. This service, however, was encountered and overcome, and they have been conveyed thus far, and proceeded on to Tampa Bay on rude litters, constructed with the axe and knife alone, with poles and dry hides—the latter being found in great abundance at the encampment of the hostiles. The litters were carried on the backs of our weak and tottering horses, aided by the residue of the command, with more ease and comfort to sufferers than I could have supposed, and with as much as they could have been in ambulances of the most improved and modern construction.

“The day after the battle we remained at our encampment, occupied in taking care of the wounded, and in the sad office of interring the dead; also in preparing litters for the removal of the wounded, and collecting, with a portion of the mounted men, the horses and cattle in the vicinity belonging to the enemy, of which we found about one hundred of the former, many of them saddled, and nearly three hundred of the latter.

“We left our encampment on the morning of the 27th, for the Kissimmee, where I had left my heavy baggage, which place we reached about noon on the 28th. After leaving two companies and a few Indians to garrison the stockade, which I found nearly completed on my return, by that active and vigilant officer, Captain Munroe, 4th artillery, I left the next morning for this place, where I arrived on the 31st, and sent forward the wounded next day to Tampa Bay, with the 4th and 6th infantry, the former to halt at Fort Frazer, remaining here myself with the 1st, in order to make preparations to take the field again as soon as my horses can be recruited, most of which have been sent to Tampa, and my supplies in a sufficient state of forwardness to justify the measure.

“In speaking of the command, I can only say, that so far as the regular troops are concerned, no one could have been more efficiently sustained than I have been, from the com-

mencement of the campaign ; and I am certain that they will always be willing and ready to discharge any duty that may be assigned them.

“ To Lieutenant Colonel Davenport, and the officers and soldiers of the First Infantry, I feel under many obligations for the manner in which they have, on all occasions, discharged their duty ; and although held in reserve, and not brought into battle until near its close, it evinced by its eagerness to engage, and the promptness and good order with which they entered the hammock, when the order was given for them to do so, is the best evidence that they would have sustained their own characters, as well as that of the regiment, had it been their fortune to have been placed in the hottest of the battle.

“ The Fourth Infantry, under their gallant leader, Lieutenant Colonel Foster, was among the first to gain the hammock, and maintained this position, as well as driving a portion of the enemy before him, until he arrived on the borders of Lake Okeechobee, which was in the rear, and continued the pursuit until near night. Lieutenant Colonel Foster, who was favourably noticed for his gallantry and good conduct in nearly all the engagements on the Niagara frontier, during the late war with Great Britain, by his several commanders, as well as in the different engagements with the Indians in this territory, never acted a more conspicuous part than in the action of the 25th ult. ; he speaks in the highest terms of the conduct of brevet Major Graham, his second in command, as also the officers and soldiers of the Fourth Infantry, who were engaged in the action. Captain Allen, with his two mounted companies of the Fourth Infantry, sustained his usual character for promptness and efficiency. Lieutenant Hooper, of the Fourth Regiment, was wounded through the arm, but continued on the field, at the head of his company, until the termination of the battle.

“ I am not sufficiently master of words to express my admiration of the gallantry and steadiness of the officers and soldiers of the sixth regiment of infantry. It was their fortune to bear the brunt of the battle. The report of the killed and wounded,



which accompanies this, is more conclusive evidence of their merits than anything I can say. After five companies of this regiment, against which the enemy directed the most deadly fire, was nearly cut up, there being only four men left uninjured in one of them ; and every officer and orderly serjeant of those companies, with one exception, were either killed or wounded, Captain Noel, with the remaining two companies, his own company, "K.," and Crossman's, "B.," commanded by second Lieutenant Woods, which was the left of the regiment, formed on the right of the fourth infantry, entered the hammock with that regiment, and continued the fight and the pursuit until its termination. It is due to Captain Andrews and Lieutenant Walker, to say they commanded two of the five companies mentioned above, and they continued to direct them, until they were both severely wounded, and carried from the field ; the latter received three separate balls.

"The Missouri volunteers, under the command of Colonel Gentry, and Morgan's spies, who formed the first line, and, of course, were the first engaged, acted as well, or even better, than troops of that description generally do ; they received and returned the enemy's fire with spirit, for some time, when they broke and retired, with the exception of Captain Gillam and a few of his company, and Lieutenant Blakey, also with a few men, who joined the regulars, and acted with them, until after the close of the battle, but not until they had suffered severely ; the commanding officer of the volunteers, Colonel Gentry, being mortally wounded while leading on his men, and encouraging them to enter the hammock, and come to close quarters with the enemy ; his son, an interesting youth, eighteen or nineteen years of age, serjeant major of the regiment, was severely wounded at the same moment.

"Captain Childs, Lieutenants Rogers and Flanagan, of Gentry's regiment, acting Major Sconce, and Lieutenants Hase and Gordon, of the spies, were wounded, while encouraging their men to a discharge of their duty.

"The volunteers and spies having, as before stated, fallen back to the baggage, could not again be formed and brought

up to the hammock in anything like order; but a number of them crossed over individually, and aided in conveying the wounded across the swamp to the hammock, among whom were Captain Curd, and several other officers, whose names I do not now recollect.

“To my personal staff, consisting of first Lieutenant J. M. Hill, of the second, and first Lieutenant George H. Griffin, of the sixth infantry, the latter aid-de-camp to Major General Gaines, and a volunteer in Florida from his staff, I feel under the greatest obligations for the promptness and efficiency with which they have sustained me throughout the campaign, and more particularly for their good conduct, and the alacrity with which they aided me and conveyed my orders during the action of the 25th ult.

“Captain Taylor, commissary of subsistence, who was ordered to join General Jesup at Tampa Bay, as chief of the subsistence department, and who was ordered by him to remain with his column until he (General Jesup) joined it, although no command was assigned Captain Taylor, he greatly exerted himself in trying to rally and bring back the volunteers into action, as well as discharging other important duties which were assigned to him during the action.

“Myself, as well as all who witnessed the attention and ability displayed by Surgeon Satterlee, medical director on this side the peninsula, assisted by assistant surgeons McLaren and Simpson, of the medical staff of the army, and Doctors Hannah and Cooke, of the Missouri volunteers, in ministering to the wounded, as well as their uniform kindness to them on all occasions, can never cease to be referred to by me but with the most pleasing and grateful recollections.

“The quartermaster's department, under the direction of that efficient officer, Major Brant, and his assistant, Lieutenant Babbit, have done everything that could be accomplished to throw forward from Tampa Bay, and keep up supplies of provisions, forage, etc., with the limited means at their disposal. Assistant commissaries Lieutenants Harrison, stationed at Fort Gardner, and McClure, at Fort Fraser, have fully met my ex-

pectations in discharge of the various duties connected with their department, as well as those assigned them in the quartermaster's department.

“This column, in six weeks, penetrated one hundred and fifty miles into the enemy's country, opened roads, and constructed bridges and causeways, when necessary, on the greater portion of the route, established two depots, and the necessary defences for the same, and finally overtook and beat the enemy in his strongest position. The results of which movement and battle have been the capture of thirty of the hostiles, the coming in and surrendering of more than one hundred and fifty Indians and negroes, mostly the former, including the chiefs Ou-la-too-gee, Tus-ta-nug-gee, and other principal men, the capturing and driving out of the country six hundred head of cattle, upwards of one hundred head of horses, besides obtaining a thorough knowledge of the country through which we operated, a greater portion of which was entirely unknown, except to the enemy.

“Colonel Gentry died in a few hours after the battle, much regretted by the army, and will be, doubtless, by all who knew him, as his state did not contain a braver man or a better citizen.

“It is due to his rank and talents, as well as to his long and important services, that I particularly mention Lieutenant Colonel A. R. Thompson, of the Sixth Infantry, who fell, in the discharge of his duty, at the head of his regiment. He was in feeble health, brought on by exposure to this climate during the past summer, refusing to leave the country while his regiment continued in it. Although he received two balls from the fire of the enemy, early in the action, which wounded him severely, yet he appeared to disregard them, and continued to give his orders with the same coolness that he would have done had his regiment been under review or on any parade duty. Advancing, he received a third ball, which at once deprived him of life. His last words were, “keep steady, men, charge the hammock—remember the regiment to which you belong.” I had known Colonel Thompson personally only for a short



time, and the more I knew of him the more I wished to know ; and, had his life been spared, our acquaintance, no doubt, would have ripened into the closest friendship. Under such circumstances, there are few, if any, other, than his bereaved wife, mother, and sisters, who more deeply and sincerely lament his loss, or who will longer cherish his memory, than myself.

“Captain Van Swearingen, Lieutenant Brooke, and Lieutenant and Adjutant Center, of the same regiment, who fell on that day, had no superiors of their years in service, and, in point of chivalry, ranked among the first in the army or nation ; besides their pure and disinterested courage, they possessed other qualifications, which qualified them to fill the highest grades of their profession, which, no doubt, they would have attained and adorned, had their lives been spared. The two former served with me on another arduous and trying campaign, and, on every occasion, whether in the camp, on the march, or on the field of battle, discharged their various duties to my entire satisfaction.

With great respect, etc., etc.,

Z. TAYLOR, Col. Com'd.

To Brig. Gen. Jones, Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.”

The immediate consequence of the battle of Lake Okeechobee, was the surrender of a number of Indians. Col. Taylor had penetrated farther into their country than any other commander, and to a point beyond which it was impossible to proceed, had he even been unincumbered by the care of the wounded. The nature of the soil, as has been seen, forbade the transportation of supplies in the usual mode, and the enemy, if disposed, was therefore at liberty to remain in the depths of their native wilderness. This, as the subsequent history of the war unhappily shows, continued to be the policy of a large number, who, scattered in petty bands over a wide extent of barren and swamp lands, were enabled to defy for years all the force which the federal government deemed expedient to employ against them. If, however, the dearly-bought

triumph of Taylor failed to reduce the whole body of the Indians to terms of peace, it still demanded the grateful recognition of the nation and the government. The sentiments of the latter were expressed in the annexed General Order.

“ Washington, February 20, 1838.

“ The Secretary of War has received from Col. Taylor, of the First Regiment of Infantry, of the affair of the 25th December last, with the Seminole Indians on the eastern shore of Lake Okeechobee, in Florida, in which the Indians, after a severe conflict, were beaten and driven at all points.

“ The gallantry and the steadiness displayed in the attack are highly creditable to the corps engaged; and the conduct of Col. Taylor, in pursuing the enemy and bringing him to action, is deserving of high commendation.

“ The triumph of success cannot lessen the regret which must be felt by all for the loss of the many valuable lives, and the severe suffering by wounds, which unavoidably attend a military achievement.

“ To Col. Taylor and the officers, non-commissioned officers, and troops of the regular army, the Secretary of War tenders the thanks of the President of the United States, for the discipline and bravery displayed by them on the occasion; as likewise to the officers and volunteers of Missouri, who shared in the conflict, and who evinced so much zeal and gallantry in bringing on the action.

“ By order of

ALEXANDER MACOMB,  
Mj. Gen. Commander-in-Chief.”

This official acknowledgement of Taylor's merit was soon after followed by promotion to the rank of Brigadier General by brevet, according to the language of the order, “for distinguished services in the battle of Kissimmee (Okeechobee), in Florida.”

In April, 1838, and soon after his promotion, the command of the troops in Florida was assigned to General Taylor, General Jesup having been relieved at his own desire. In this

new and responsible position, his entire energies were devoted to the protection of the inhabitants from attacks of the Indians, and of the reduction of the latter to submission to the authority of the United States. The perfect accomplishment of these objects was impracticable with the means and forces placed at the disposal of the commander. In a communication to the war department, written by General Jesup, on the ninth of February, 1838, prior to his recall, he makes these decided remarks on the subject of the war :

“As a soldier, it is my duty, I am aware, not to comment on the policy of the government, but to carry it out in accordance with my instructions. I have endeavoured faithfully to do so, but the prospect of terminating the war in any reasonable time is any thing but flattering. My decided opinion is, that unless *immediate* emigration be abandoned, the war will continue for years to come, and at constantly accumulating expense.”

In the letter, of which this is a prophetic passage, the distinguished writer earnestly recommends that the Indians be allowed to remain within certain limits, at a distance from the white population. The advice, however, was not followed, and General Taylor was entrusted with the task which four able predecessors had in vain endeavoured to perform. From time to time skirmishes with the Indians took place, and individuals, or small parties of them, were captured or voluntarily surrendered. But they could never be brought to a general action, and after a short season of comparative repose, they renewed, against the defenceless inhabitants of the frontier, the acts of barbarity which had marked their first hostilities.

To put an end to this work, an expedient was at last devised, which, as it was the subject of much severe animadversion at the time, and of which General Taylor bore a part, it is proper that his candid biographer should record. This expedient was the use of blood-hounds in pursuit of the Indians. The annunciation of such a purpose was at first received with doubt, and finally visited with unqualified censure, in those parts of the country where, on the one hand, the sufferings of the peo-



ple of Florida from their savage neighbours were not appreciated, and where on the other the real agency of the blood-hounds was not understood. An inquiry into the matter having been instituted by Congress, it appeared that the local government of Florida originated the measure, and that the War Department had no share in it. It also appeared, and the public mind was afterwards fully satisfied on the point, that the dogs were employed not to destroy, nor even to harass, the Indians, but simply to follow their trails and indicate their hiding-places. Even for this purpose they were soon found incompetent, and the use of them was discontinued after a brief trial. But it is not the less expedient to show here by positive testimony in what mode and to what extent they were used, and what were the circumstances which induced an experiment, the naked mention of which seems to prove it inconsistent with humanity and the laws of civilized warfare.

A correspondence on this subject was submitted by the Secretary of War to the Chairman of the Committee of Military Affairs in the United States Senate, showing that the introduction of the dogs into Florida was made by the authorities of that territory, and that they were to be used "as guides to discover the lurking-places of the Indians, and not to worry or destroy them." The Secretary further stated that the importation of the animals was made by the Governor and Council of Florida without consultation with the War Department, which was ignorant of the intention until after their arrival. It was the intention to use them muzzled and secured by leashes held by the keepers. This declaration of the Secretary was confirmed by General Taylor himself, who said in a letter to the Department, that the object in employing the dogs was "only to ascertain where the Indians could be found—not to injure them." This fact being apparent, it is only necessary to show under what circumstances the introduction of such aids was suggested, to prove that the measure was not only undeserving censure, but that if it could have accomplished its object, it was demanded by every consideration of justice

and humanity, regarding the long-suffering inhabitants of the Florida frontiers.

It was not until these people, engaged in the peaceful cares of their plantations, had been exposed for five years to the loss of property and life at the hands of the Indians, and when every attempt at conciliation had failed, and every exertion of force proved abortive, that the assistance of dogs, less ferocious than the Indians themselves, was essayed to discover and subdue them. The journals of the period are burdened with accounts of the ruin and murder which they visited upon their unoffending neighbours. A few examples may serve to prove to what grievous extremities the latter were reduced.

In the spring of 1839, strenuous efforts were made to conclude a peace with the Indians. Negotiations had been entered into with their chiefs, and their country enjoyed at the hands of our troops the protection of a white flag. It was under these circumstances that the residence of Mr. Edmund Gray, a respectable citizen of Jefferson county, was attacked by one of their marauding parties. While sitting in his house, after dark, with his children around him, himself and one of them, an infant in years, were shot. Another child, attempting to fly, was also shot. A third was knocked down with a musket and pierced with bayonet wounds. The fourth, a little girl, and only remaining member of the family, escaped to tell the tale of its slaughter, in which thirty savages took part.

In the same vicinity, two dwellings of another citizen presented a scene of similar barbarities; and after the murder of the inmates, the houses were burnt to the ground.

At another settlement, the head of the family was wounded and his little boy killed. Three children of a planter, in his absence from home, were butchered. A respectable widow lady and her five children shared the same fate, and other families escaping from their ruined homes, were thrown destitute upon the charity of distant friends.

The contemporaneous narratives of these and other atrocities present them in the most impressive light, and a few extracts are pertinent to the purpose of demonstrating the deplorable

condition of families exposed to the treachery and cruelty of the enemy. The following is from the Tallahassee Star of July, 1839.

“On Saturday night, between nine and ten o’clock, the family of Mr. Green Chairs, about ten miles from town, was attacked by the Indians. Mrs. Chairs was sitting by the table, sewing, surrounded by her interesting family, consisting of her husband and six children. An Indian rifle was fired, and Mrs. Chairs fell dead. Mr. Chairs instantly sprang up, and seizing his rifle, closed the doors and windows, and determined to defend his dwelling. He directed the four elder children to make their escape by the back door. One of them, young lady of seventeen, was seen and pursued by the savages, but, wearing a dark cloak, she was enabled to conceal herself in some bushes. Mr. Chairs, at the same time, discovered that the house had been fired; and, so rapid was the progress of the flames, that this new danger, and the consternation produced by the death of his wife, caused him to forget his two youngest children. He fled, leaving them;—and both, helpless infants, were burnt to cinders, with his dwelling, and all else that it contained. Information of this horrid transaction reached our city during the night.”

The same journal relates this incident. “Two wagons left Fort Frank Brooke on Monday, and, after proceeding a short distance, they were fired upon, by Indians, from a hammock, and two men killed. The body of one was afterwards found, horribly mutilated, with the eyes dug out, the throat cut, and otherwise disfigured. The body of the other could not be found.” At this time, a “Treaty” was supposed to be in force with the Indians. In the same month, the faithless and vindictive barbarians butchered a portion of Colonel Harney’s command, under circumstances thus narrated by a correspondent of the National Gazette:

“On the 28th of July, four dragoons, two wounded, arrived here, (Garey’s Ferry, East Florida,) and reported the massacre of a large part of Colonel Harney’s command, who were sent to the Caloosahatchee to establish a trading-house, in con-



formity with Macomb's Treaty. The Indians had, for some time, manifested the most friendly dispositions, daily visiting the camp, and trading with the sutler. So completely had they lulled the troops into security, that no defence was erected, and no guard maintained. The camp was on the margin of the river. At dawn, on the 23d of July, the enemy made a simultaneous attack on the camp and the trading-house. Those who escaped their first discharge fled naked to the river, and effected their escape in some fishing-smacks. Colonel Harney was among them. The serjeant, and four others, while descending the river, were called to the shore by a well-known Indian, who spoke English perfectly, with the assurance that they would not be harmed. They complied, and were instantly butchered. Altogether, eighteen were killed. Colonel Harney afterwards cautiously approached the spot, and found eleven bodies shockingly mutilated, and two hundred and fifty Indians, in the neighbourhood, dancing and whooping in savage triumph."

A correspondent of the Army and Navy Chronicle wrote, as follows, from Fort King, under date of the 6th of September, 1839.

"I am sorry to say, that the Florida war is far from being ended. Hardly a week passes without some outrages by the Indians. A party of volunteers, bathing in Orange lake a few days ago, were attacked, and one of them killed. An express rider was shot on the road, and his body mutilated. I could enumerate a thousand instances of Indian murders since the "treaty." When I saw them receiving presents at this post, I was disgusted to think we were shaking hands with men whose blood-stained hands and treacherous looks denoted anything but peaceable intentions."

One other example of this relentless hate may close this subject. It is from the Charleston Mercury of August, 1840.

"By the schooner *Empire*, Capt. Southwick, we have received St. Augustine papers of the 21st inst., from which we copy the following account of the butchery at Indian Key, which varies in some particulars from that already published.

“The steamer Santee, Captain Poinsett, arrived on Wednesday morning from the south, bringing passengers the family of Dr. Perrine, late of Indian Key. She brought in tow, from New Smyrna, the steamer Wm. Gaston, which boat had sustained injury some time since.

“It becomes again our mournful duty to record the successful effusion of blood in this ill-fated territory, and the triumphant accomplishment, on the part of the Indians, of an adventure bordering on romance. Indian Key, a small spot of not over seven acres in extent, and situated a short distance in advance, midway between old and new Matacomba Key, about thirty miles from the main land, and on our Southern Atlantic coast, was invested by seventeen boats containing Indians; seven of its inhabitants murdered, the island plundered, and its buildings burnt.

“About two o'clock on the morning of the 7th inst., a Mr. Glass, in the employ of Mr. Houseman, happening to be up, saw boats approaching, and informed a person in the same employ, when they passed into Mr. Houseman's garden, and were satisfied that they were boats containing Indians. The Indians commenced their firing upon the house of Mr. Houseman and Dr. Perrine; the former of whom, with his family, and that of Mr. Charles Howe and his family, succeeded in escaping to boats, and crossed over to Teatable Key. The family of Dr. Perrine passed through a trap-door into their bathing-room, from whence they got into the turtle crawl, and by great effort removed the logs and escaped to the front of Houseman's store. They then went to a boat at the wharf, which six Indians (all who remained) had partly filled, and were in the store after a further supply. They then pushed off and pulled with an oar, a paddle and poles towards the Medium. They were met by a boat when they had rowed a mile, and taken to the schooner.

“Mr. Motte and wife, and Mrs. Johnson, a lady of seventy years of age, fled into an out-house, from whence Mrs. Motte was dragged by an Indian, and while in the act of calling on her husband, “John, save me!” she was killed. Mr. Motte

shared the same fate, and was scalped; and the old lady, as she was dragged forth, suddenly jerking from the Indian, broke his hold, and escaped under a house. Her grandchild, a daughter of Mrs. Motte, aged four years, was then killed with a club, and the infant strangled and thrown in the water. This was seen by Mrs. Johnson from her hiding-place; but the Indians fired this building; and she was again forced to flee, and escaped to Malony's wharf, and secreted herself, and was finally rescued. James Sturdy, a boy about eleven years of age, hid himself in the cistern under Mr. Houseman's house, and was scalded to death by the burning building heating the water. The remains of an adult skeleton were found among the ruins of Dr. Perrine's house, supposed to be the doctor, as well as that of a child, thought to have been a slave of Mr. Houseman.

"The Indians were what is known as Spanish Indians, and were headed by Chekekia, the same chief who headed the party massacring the men at Caloosahatchie. They obtained a great amount of plunder from the houses and stores; and whilst engaged in obtaining these articles, Mrs. Perrine, with her two daughters and little son, reached a boat partially loaded, and put off to the schooner Medium, laying at some distance. They were promptly rescued by a boat coming to their assistance, and were taken to the schooner.

"On Mr. Houseman reaching Teatable Bay, Midshipman Murray, U. S. N., started with his only available force of fifteen men and two swivels, ten of whom were in hospital, so sick as to be certainly unfit for duty, but urging their claim, were permitted, hoping to cut off the boats, and thus prevent the escape of the Indians. On the second fire of his guns, they recoiled overboard, and the Indians then commenced a fire upon his boat from a six-pounder, belonging to Mr. Houseman, charged with musket balls, and drove back this active officer.

"Communication was immediately despatched to Lieut. McLaughlin, who was at Key Biscayne with the United States schooners Flirt and Ostego, and they proceeded down. The Indians, however, had escaped, after maintaining possession of



the island twelve hours, carrying off large quantities of powder and other articles, and laying the little settlement in ashes. All escaped save the unfortunates named above.

“Among the bold and lawless feats of daring which have characterized the enemy during the war, there is nothing that will bear a comparison with this. We have seen the murdered remains of the citizen and soldier almost within sight of the garrison, when the white flag of overture was waving to these inhuman rascals in acts of kindness. We have seen the armed rider stricken by the bullet from the covert of the hammock, and the carriage of the traveller made to receive the last life drop of its occupant. We have seen the faithlessness of the tribe, even when the humanity of the white man was devising every means for its comfort, planning their accursed schemes of murder, and Caloosahatchie, the ground of confidence and good will, red with the blood of our troops and citizens. But an island we had thought safe. As little would we have looked for an avalanche amid the sands of Arabia, or the glowing warmth of the equator, amid the “Greenland’s icy mountains,” as an attack from Indians upon an island. A force, too, of seventeen canoes, averaging five men each, make a voyage of at least thirty miles from the main land, and “ransack, pillage, and destroy,” and return in safety! When will these horrors end?”

It were an easy task to compile a volume of narratives similar to the foregoing, establishing the perfidy and ineffable barbarity of the Seminole character. Enough, however, has been cited for this object; enough to satisfy the judgment of a Christian age, that short of imitation of their own cruelties, of retaliation upon their own women and children, no means could merit censure, which might seem necessary and available to reduce such enemies into subjection. So far as General Taylor is supposed to be responsible for the employment of blood-hounds in tracing these blood-men, it is conceived that he is wholly vindicated. His reputation is now the care of his contemporaries, as his life will be the study of posterity; and if an unjust blot has ever been cast upon his name, this gene-

ration may forever wipe it off, feeling that his honour is the honour of his country.

From the day of his appointment to the command of the army in Florida, General Taylor had made the most effective disposition of his forces to accomplish the object, which was imposed by the government, but believed to be impracticable by every man familiar with the numbers, dispositions, and situation of the Seminoles. The treaty, already mentioned, was concluded with some of their people by General Macomb in person, who had left Washington with diplomatic powers for that purpose. Pending its promised observance on their part, and its actual observance on the part of the United States army and citizens, the unprovoked and atrocious butcheries and burnings by the Indians were continued. The federal government at last, after having called from time to time about fifteen thousand men into the field, after expending fifteen millions of money, and sacrificing in a service, not less ungrateful than arduous, many of the noblest officers of the army and of the volunteer corps, abandoned its policy, and determined, towards the close of 1839, to leave the Indians in their impenetrable strongholds, and to confine the operations of the troops to the protection of the border settlements. In the general orders of the War Department, in November of that year, the conduct of the commander was approved in these terms:

“General Taylor, by the zealous and intelligent discharge of his duties, having given satisfaction to the Department, will continue in command.”

The plan of operations defined for the campaign embraced the expulsion of the enemy from the settlements, by occupying the country north of a line extending from Pilatka to the mouth of the Withlacoochee, and thence along the western coast to the Apalachicola. To assist the regulars the inhabitants were armed for the protection of their firesides. General Taylor's skill and energies were faithfully exerted to fulfil these designs, but the force at his disposal was never adequate. The vengeance of the Seminole continued, at every defenceless point, to be wreaked upon the white man; and neither the feebleness

of age, the innocence of childhood, nor the loveliness of tender sex, pleaded exemption from frightful torture and death at his hands. Having laboured four years in this thankless field, General Taylor was anxious to retire from it, and, at his own request, was relieved from the command and succeeded by General Armistead, in April, 1840. His course of duty, however trying to his feelings, may have aided in preparing him for the dangers and difficulties of the larger and more glorious sphere in which he is now to be presented. In this he has become known, not only to his countrymen, but to the world. But had the chances of life closed his military career with his command in Florida, the intelligent student of his operations there, would have found enough to prove his talents, his firmness, and his courage, his influence over others, and his forgetfulness of himself, worthy of any position to which he might have been called by the exigencies of a great nation.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

General Taylor in the South-west—Tender of a public Dinner—Mexico in 1822—Spirit of her Institutions—Injustice to Texas—Revolt of Texas—Annexation of Texas—Duty of a Soldier—Taylor ordered to defend Texas—Conditions of the Order—Invasion of Texas defined—Gen. Taylor embarks for Corpus Christi—Number of his Troops—Ordered to Matamoras—His Despatches from the date of embarking for Corpus Christi to the breaking up of the Camp at that point.

LEAVING Florida, General Taylor was appointed to the command of the First Department of the army in the south-west, comprehending the States of Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, his head-quarters being at Fort Jesup, in the latter State. In the summer of 1841, being ordered to relieve Gen. Arbuckle, at Fort Gibson, the compliment of a public dinner, while on his way thither, was tendered him by his fellow citizens of Little Rock, Arkansas, "as an expression of their esteem for his personal worth and meritorious public services."



To the letter of invitation, Gen. Taylor made answer, that under ordinary circumstances it would have afforded him great pleasure to accept the invitation; but having been already detained on his journey to the frontier an unusual length of time, he did not feel authorized to make, on his own account, any delay whatever. He was, therefore, compelled to decline the proffered hospitality. In concluding his reply, he gave assurances of his best exertions to secure the object of his command on the frontier. Time proved to what extent, then so unforeseen, he redeemed the pledge. Five years elapsed before the occasion was presented of varying the monotonous routine of military duty incident to national peace. The events of that and a previous period, tending to a breach of that condition, may be glanced at, as properly introductory to the new and grand drama of the war between the United States and Mexico, in which General Taylor has acted a most illustrious part.

Mexico, after a struggle worthy of the highest destiny, to free herself from the rule of Spain, succeeded, in 1822, in establishing her independence. Had the eyes of her revolutionary chieftains been turned towards the United States; then peaceful, and prospering under a political system tested for nearly half a century, they might have learned the secret of popular self-government, and have founded her nationality upon a secure and beneficent basis. But it was her misfortune to have many Arnolds, and many Burrs, but no Hamiltons, no Washingtons. Rejecting the principle of religious equality and rights, which the framers of the American Constitution held essential to its vitality, and forgetting the judicial safeguards of personal liberty, the authors of her independent government wrought it to an imperfect form, but breathed into it no living soul. Inconsistent with abstract justice, it could gain no permanent favour with the intelligence of the enlightened few, or the affections of the ignorant mass. Wanting the prestige of time, and unequal to the test of brief experiment, it became the puppet of political charlatans, quarrelling for the honour and the profit of the exhibition, and each in turn leaving it more and more abused, broken, contemptible, and worthless.

Among the provinces of Mexico, which regarded with early aversion the anti-republican features of her constitution, and the tyranny of the men who governed in its name, was Texas; at first, the least significant in wealth or population. Its citizens, in 1833, sought admission into the Mexican Union as a sovereign state, and, with that view, sent a commissioner to the federal government. Failing to obtain any answer to the application, the commissioner advised his fellow-citizens of Texas to organize a state irrespective of its authority. The letter containing this suggestion was disclosed to the government; and its author, while returning to his constituents, was seized, and imprisoned for many months, without information of the cause of his arrest. The wrong to him, was felt to be equally a wrong to them. Mexico, by her weak and wicked rulers, instead of pruning discontent in Texas with a gentle hand, scattered the seeds of hatred, which sprang up with magic vigour, soon overshadowing her own name and strength. Less than two years after the outrage committed upon the Texan envoy, the administration of Mexico was in the hands of a military despot. The local government of her states was annihilated by a formal decree, and the institution of central tyranny asserted under the auspices of twenty thousand muskets. A minister of the new rule, with a due proportion of these aids, appeared in Texas to confirm its virtue. The menace of arms was met by arms. On the 27th of September, when the brightness of a southern summer was departing before the mists of autumn, their first clash was heard; and, from that day, the glory and the power of Mexico departed from Texas. The assaulted province drove the invaders, beaten and disgraced, from her borders. Her cause invited adventurous spirits from the United States. Texas declared herself free and independent. Mexico, with her best general, and thousands of her veteran troops, advanced upon the infant republic, resolved upon its ruin. But the boast was vain, the effort abortive. Alamo told how the soldiers of Texas could die; San Jacinto how they could conquer. Still Mexico learned not wisdom. Having eyes, she saw not; having

ears, she heard not. But, like a hot-tempered child, who cries and throws about his limbs for the toy which he has wilfully broken, she continued to exclaim, and to brandish her arms, while the world looked piteously or contemptuously upon the futile exhibition.

Texas, feeling conscious of ability to maintain her sovereignty, proceeded to organize a government based upon that of the United States. Ambitious, however, of accomplishing in a lustre the work of a generation, her financial affairs became embarrassed, and her sagacious people, to repair the error, soon agitated the question of annexation with the American Union. A proposition, to this effect, was rejected, as involving bad faith with Mexico, which still asserted authority over the revolted province, and promised, from time to time, to reduce it to subjection. A state of nominal war existed, without any act to prove its reality.

From year to year, the question was agitated in the United States, with increasing warmth,—the party opposed to it maintaining a majority in Congress. Mexico, at last, seriously fearing the consummation, consented conditionally to acknowledge the independence of Texas. But the compliance yielded with so late and poor a grace, failed of its object. The act of annexation was confirmed, by Congress, on the 1st day of March, 1845; and thus, ten years from the time that Texas first raised an arm to repel the force of a despotic Mexican, she was lost to Mexico forever. When the consummation of the act became known to the latter, the resolution was avowed of resisting it, and preparations for subjugating the country north of the Rio Grande were declared anew. Preliminary measures had already been adopted under apprehensions of the event, which then became certain. The Mexican forces, on the right of that river, had been increased, and Monterey, Matamoros, and Mier, placed in a better condition of defence.

The limits, if not the objects, of this work forbid any discussion, receiving its tone from attachment to a political party, of the immediate causes of the war between the United States and Mexico. It is a clear proposition that the safety and inde-



pendence of any nation at war with another, are closely allied with the implicit obedience of its professional soldiery to the orders of their government. Whenever a general may pause to consider the policy of a contest, in which he is directed to take part by the civil power to which he is subordinate, reliance upon the appeal to arms for protection from a foreign state is at an end. The military power is then ascendant at home, and liberty is lost. The patriotic and consistent commander has a single and simple duty to perform—to follow the instructions and accomplish the purposes of his government. He cannot look behind such instructions, being conformable to the rules of civilized warfare, nor can others do so in judging his character and conduct.

It is undeniable that a large portion, probably a majority, of the people of the United States have been from the first opposed to the war with Mexico, and to most of the federal measures which led to it. But there can be few, however earnest in their condemnation of the government, who do not justly draw the distinction between its acts and responsibility, and those of the men who have been entrusted with the occupation and invasion of the territory over which Mexico still asserts her sovereignty. It may be said particularly of General Taylor, that the war in its inception found no favour in his eyes. He was selected, however, to take the field in the outset, and before war had been declared, or any act of hostility committed on either side. From that moment he has been devoted to the one object of reducing the enemy to terms of peace.

In May, 1845, General Taylor was instructed by the Secretary of War to have the forces under his command, or which might be assigned to it, put into a position where they might most promptly and efficiently act in defence of Texas in the event of such action becoming necessary. The instructions of the Department under this date were confidential, and were so worded as to imply clearly an apprehension, that the consequence of the annexation of Texas might be a collision with Mexico. The Secretary stated, that as soon as the Texan

Congress should assent to the act, and a convention should assemble and accept the terms offered in the joint annexation resolutions of the Congress of the United States, Texas would be regarded "as part of the United States, so far as to be entitled from this government a defence from *foreign invasion* and Indian incursions." General Taylor was accordingly directed to keep his command in readiness for this duty. The anticipation of difficulty with Mexico was further indicated by instructions to General Taylor to open a correspondence with the authorities of Texas, or any diplomatic agent of the United States residing therein, with a view to information and advice in respect to the common Indian enemy, "as well as to any foreign power;" and also to employ his forces in defence of the Texan territory, if invaded by "a foreign power," and to expel the invaders.

General Taylor was thus apprised of the service which might be expected of him. In July of the same year, 1845, he was informed by the War Department, that the acceptance by Texas of the terms of annexation would probably be formally made by the Congress of that Republic on the 4th of that month, and in anticipation of that event, he was instructed to make an immediate forward movement, with the troops under his command, and advance to the mouth of the Sabine, or to such other point on the gulf of Mexico, or its navigable waters, as might be most convenient for an embarkation, at the proper time, for the western frontier of Texas.

The most expeditious route was recommended. The force named for this duty was the 3d and 4th regiments of infantry, and seven companies of the 2d regiment of dragoons. Two companies of the 4th infantry were ordered to join their regiments. The artillery was ordered from New Orleans.

The ultimate point, then mentioned, of Taylor's destination, was the western frontier of Texas, on, or near, the Rio Grande del Norte, where he was ordered to select and occupy such a site as would consist with the health of the troops, and be best adapted to repel invasion, and to protect what, in the

event of annexation, would be the western border. The defence of the territory of Texas was defined as the limit of his action, unless Mexico should declare war against the United States.

These movements to the gulf of Mexico, and the preparations to embark for the western frontier of Texas, were ordered to be made without any delay: but a landing was not to be effected, on that frontier, until the due acceptance of Texas, of the proffered terms of annexation, had been ascertained.

In reply to inquiries by General Taylor of the War Department respecting the position he should take, he was directed, generally, to be governed by circumstances, to avoid all aggressive measures, and to hold his force ready to protect the territory of Texas "to the extent that it had been occupied by the people of Texas." The Rio Grande was indicated, by the secretary, as the boundary between Mexico and Texas, to which the Army of Occupation was to approach, as nearly as prudence would permit. For this purpose, it was necessary to pass the Nueces.

A letter from the department, dated in the following month, contains this passage:

"Should Mexico assemble a large body of troops, on the Rio Grande, and cross it with a considerable force, such a movement must be regarded as an invasion of the United States, and the commencement of hostilities. You will, of course, use all the authority which has been, or may be, given you, to meet such a state of things. Texas must be protected from hostile invasion, and for that purpose, you will of course employ, to the utmost extent, all the means you possess, or can command."

At the same time that these instructions were sent to General Taylor, a naval force was despatched to the gulf of Mexico to aid him in any hostile operations which might occur. To this result, affairs were rapidly tending.

Pursuant to these instructions, General Taylor proceeded, in July, 1845, to New Orleans, whence he embarked, with a



force of fifteen hundred men, and arrived, early in the following month, at St. Joseph's Island. From this point, he embarked again for Corpus Christi, where he established his head quarters. In September, an enquiry was made by the United States' consul at Mexico, under authority of the government, whether a minister would be received, by Mexico, with powers to settle all points in dispute between the two countries. A favourable answer was received, and the minister was appointed. On his arrival at the Mexican capital, a revolution, headed by Paredes, was in progress, which proved successful. The new government refused to acknowledge the American envoy, except as a special agent. The consequence was the abandonment of negotiations through this medium. Pending this attempt at a peaceable adjustment of difficulties, the winter had passed, General Taylor remaining encamped at Corpus Christi. He had been reinforced, soon after his arrival, by seven companies of the 7th Infantry, under Major Brown, and two companies of volunteer artillery, under Major Gally, with eight field-pieces. On the 8th of March, 1846, the camp at Corpus Christi was broken up, and the advance of the army, consisting of Major Ringgold's Light Artillery, and the cavalry, the whole commanded by Colonel Twiggs, took up the line of march for Matamoras. On the three ensuing days, the brigades of infantry followed. The siege-train, and a field-battery, were sent by water to Point Isabel, with a corps of engineers, and the officers of ordnance, under the command of Major Munroe.

As the correspondence of General Taylor, while in command of the Army of Occupation, is necessary not only to a clear understanding of his views and early movements, but to afford that just exposition of his character, which is essential to a faithful biography, the annexed letters and despatches to the Adjutant General, are inserted in their proper order. Connected with the preceding narrative, they require no comment.

Head-Quarters 1st Military Department.

New Orleans, La., July 20, 1845.

SIR: I respectfully acknowledge your communication of July 8, covering the instructions of the Secretary of War of the same date, relative to the Mexican settlements on this side of the Rio Grande. Those instructions will be closely obeyed; and the department may rest assured that I will take no step to interrupt the friendly relations between the United States and Mexico. I am gratified at receiving these instructions, as they confirm my views, previously communicated, in regard to the proper line to be occupied at present by our troops.

I am sir very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head-Quarters Army of Occupation.

Steamship Alabama, Aransas Pass,

Texas, July 28, 1845.

SIR: I respectfully report my arrival at this place on the 25th instant, with eight companies of the 3d infantry, it having been found necessary to leave two companies of that regiment, to be brought over in other transports.

The troops are temporarily established on St. Joseph's Island. I am waiting the report of a boat expedition sent to Corpus Christi Bay before I determine on the site of an encampment. I hope to receive the necessary information in the course of the day, when I shall immediately commence the removal of the 3d infantry to the point selected. The position will probably be "Live Oak Point," in Aransas Bay, some ten miles from our present position. I am very anxious to establish myself at the mouth of the Neuces, but the extreme shoalness of the water will, I fear, present an insuperable obstacle, unless we can procure lighters of much lighter draught than those we have at present.

The difficulties of effecting a debarkation on this coast, and of establishing depots for supplying the army, are much greater

than I anticipated, and will render our operations at once embarrassing and expensive. Between Pass Cavallo and Brazos Santiago, there is no entrance for vessels drawing more than seven or eight feet; and the prevailing winds render the operation of lightening extremely uncertain and hazardous. We have been favoured with fine weather, and, should it continue, the other transports, which may now be expected, will be enabled to discharge without difficulty.

We had a very favourable run from New Orleans; and I am happy to state that the health of the command was greatly improved by the voyage. The eight companies have scarcely any sickness at this time.

The day before leaving New Orleans, I received from Major Donelson a communication dated at Austin, on the 7th of July, informing me that the convention had unanimously accepted the proposition of annexation, and suggested that two companies should be posted at Austin. I still deem it best to concentrate my force until our relations with Mexico shall become settled, and until the country can be examined, and the best mode of supply ascertained.

I hear nothing important from the Mexican frontier. Some Indian depredations are committed from time to time near Corpus Christi, and will claim my first attention after I can get established.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Corpus Christi, Texas, August 15, 1845.

SIR: I have the honour to report that, by New Orleans papers of the 7th instant, I have received intelligence of the preparatory steps taken by Mexico towards a declaration of war against the United States. I shall spare no exertions to meet suitably this probable change in the relations between the two countries; and the additional force ordered to join



me, as announced in your communication of July 30, will, I trust, enable me to do something more than maintain a merely defensive attitude on the Neuces. This will depend upon the demonstrations made by Mexico along the Rio Grande, in regard to which the Secretary of War has solicited a report. I am enabled to say, upon information which is regarded as authentic, that General Arista was to leave Monterey on the 4th of this month for Matamoros with 1500 men—500 being cavalry. I learn, from the same source, that there are 500 regular troops at Matamoros. In regard to the force at other points on the Rio Grande, except the militia of the country, I have no information; nor do I hear that the reported concentration at Matamoros is for any purpose of invasion. I have but just arrived at this place, and hope in a few days to be able to obtain more full and precise intelligence concerning the movements of the Mexicans. I shall not fail to communicate promptly to the department all such intelligence upon which I think reliance can be placed.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head Quarters Army of Occupation,  
Corpus Christi, Texas, August 19, 1845.

SIR: I respectfully enclose for the information of the department, a copy of a letter addressed by me to the president of Texas, and forwarded to him by special express on the 17th instant. I have deemed it proper to make this communication to President Jones, in consequence of the desire manifested by the authorities of Texas to have a garrison established at once at Austin. As I cannot consent to detach any portion of my command while a superior Mexican force is probably concentrating in my front, and as I still feel bound to extend every assistance compatible with a successful prosecution of the main object of the expedition, towards putting the frontier in a suitable state of defence, I have judged it prudent to make the sug-

gestions and recommendations which you will find in the enclosed letter. Trusting that they will meet the approbation of the War Department,

I remain, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head Quarters Army of Occupation,  
Corpus Christi, Texas, August 30, 1845.

SIR: I respectfully report the arrival at this point of seven companies of the 7th infantry under Major Brown, and two companies of volunteer artillery under Major Gally. Major Seawell's company, I am informed, was ordered back to Baton Rouge by General Gaines, and some small detachments of that regiment were also left at several posts. I have retained one company as a guard for the depot at St. Joseph Island.

The battalion of volunteer artillery has a fine battery of eight pieces—two twelves and six sixes, completely equipped in every respect. The officers are zealous, and the men seem to be quite well instructed in their duties. In case of need, I look for valuable service from this battalion.

I have just received a communication from President Jones, under date of the 23d instant, notifying me that he had taken preparatory steps towards organizing a volunteer force of 1000 men to assist me if necessary. This matter will form the subject of a special communication to your office in a few days.

Apprehending that the erroneous impressions current in New Orleans in regard to our situation, might induce General Gaines to order the muster of a battalion or brigade of infantry, I addressed a communication to his staff officer by the steamship Alabama, expressing my thanks for the reinforcement of the volunteer battalion of artillery, but with the hope that no more volunteers would be sent without a requisition from me. That communication will reach New Orleans to night or to-morrow, in time, I trust, to stop the employment of any more volunteers.

We have no news from the Rio Grande. Idle stories are brought in from that quarter, but with the means of accurate information which we now possess, I do not deem it necessary to repeat them.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Corpus Christi, Texas, October 4, 1845.

SIR: I beg leave to suggest some considerations in relation to the present position of our force, and the dispositions which may become necessary for the more effectual prosecution of the objects for which it has been concentrated. It will be recollected that the instructions of June 15, issued by Mr. Bancroft, then acting Secretary of War, directed me to "select and occupy, on or near the Rio Grande, such a site as will consist with the health of the troops, and will be best adapted to repel invasion," &c. Brazos Santiago is the nearest entrance to the mouth of the Rio Grande; and Point Isabel, within that entrance, and twenty-one miles from Matamoros, would have fulfilled more completely than any other position the conditions imposed by the Secretary. But we had no artillery, no engineer force or appliances, and but a moderate amount of infantry; and the occupation of Point Isabel, under these circumstances, and with at least the possibility of resistance from the Mexicans, might have compromised the safety of the command. I therefore determined to take up the next accessible position in the rear, which is the mouth of the Neuces river. All the information which I could obtain before leaving New Orleans, seemed to point to Corpus Christi as the most suitable point for concentration; and, although before the President's instructions of July 30 reached me, I would have preferred a position on the left bank of the river, yet a careful examination of the country had already convinced me that none could be found combining so many advantages as this. Every day's



experience has confirmed these impressions. Corpus Christi is healthy, easily supplied, and well situated to hold in observation the course of the Rio Grande from Matamoros to Laredo—being about 150 miles from several points on the river. I have reason to believe, moreover, that a salutary moral effect has been exercised upon the Mexicans. Their traders are continually carrying home the news of our position and increasing numbers, and are confessedly struck by the spectacle of a large camp of well-appointed and disciplined troops, accompanied by perfect security to their persons and property, instead of the impressment and pillage to which they are subject in their own country. For these reasons, our position thus far has, I think, been the best possible; but, now that the entire force will soon be concentrated, it may well be a question whether the views of government will be best carried out by our remaining at this point. It is with great deference that I make any suggestions on topics which may become matter of delicate negotiation: but if our government, in settling the question of boundary, makes the line of the Rio Grande an ultimatum, I cannot doubt that the settlement will be greatly facilitated and hastened by our taking possession at once of one or two suitable points on or quite near that river. Our strength and state of preparation should be displayed in a manner not to be mistaken. However salutary may be the effect produced upon the border people by our presence here, we are too far from the frontier to impress the government of Mexico with our readiness to vindicate, by force of arms, if necessary, our title to the country as far as the Rio Grande. The “army of occupation” will, in a few days, be concentrated at this point, in condition for vigorous and efficient service. Mexico having as yet made no positive declaration of war, or committed any overt act of hostilities, I do not feel at liberty, under my instructions, particularly those of July 8, to make a forward movement to the Rio Grande without authority from the War Department.

In case a forward movement should be ordered or authorized, I would recommend the occupation of Point Isabel and

Laredo, as best adapted to the purposes of observing the course of the river, and covering the frontier settlements of Texas. Point Isabel is accessible by water, and can be safely occupied by two brigades of infantry, with a suitable force of field artillery. On the arrival of the steamer Harney, I shall order a careful reconnoissance of Brazos Santiago, as a necessary preliminary measure to the occupation of Point Isabel. To occupy Laredo will require a land march from this point. Supplies may probably be transported by water as high as San Patricio, and possibly to the junction of the Rio Frio with the Nueces. I propose to establish a depot on the Nueces river, probably at the crossing of the San Antonio and Laredo road, from which to operate towards the Rio Grande. You will perceive, from my "special orders" No. 24, that a reconnoissance has been ordered in that direction. A brigade of infantry, with the cavalry, and a battery or two of field artillery, will be sufficient for the occupation of Laredo. That town is on the left bank of the Rio Grande, and possesses the military advantage of holding in observation the main route from the interior of Mexico through Monterey to Matamoros.

In case it should be found impracticable to establish a suitable depot on the Nueces, the entire force, after strengthening San Antonio, might be thrown forward to Point Isabel, where it could be readily supplied, and held in readiness for any further service.

I have deemed it my duty to make the above suggestions. Should they be favourably considered, and instructions based upon them, I will thank you to send the latter in duplicate to Lieutenant Colonel Hunt—one copy to be despatched *direct*, without delay; the other to be sent via Galveston, should a steamer be running to that port from New Orleans.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

P. S.—It is proper to add, that should any auxiliary force be required, I propose to draw it wholly from Texas. I do

not conceive that it will become necessary, under any circumstances, to call for volunteers from the United States.

Z. T.

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Head Quarters, Army of Occupation,  
Corpus Christi, Texas, November 7, 1845.

SIR: I respectfully enclose a copy of a letter from Commodore Conner, commanding the home squadron, which I received by the "Saratoga," sloop of war, on the 5th instant. The intelligence communicated by the commodore will, doubtless, reach the seat of government long before the receipt of this letter.

The communication from the Secretary of War, dated October 16, was received and acknowledged on the 1st and 2d instant. I purposely deferred a detailed reply to the various points embraced in that communication until I could receive an answer to mine of October 4, which covered (at least in part) the same ground. The intelligence from Mexico, however, tends to modify, in some degree, the views expressed in that communication. The position now occupied by the troops may, perhaps, be the best while negotiations are pending, or at any rate until a disposition shall be manifested by Mexico to protract them unreasonably. Under the supposition that such may be the view of the department, I shall make no movement from this point, except for the purpose of examining the country, until further instructions are received. You will perceive, from my orders, that reconnoissances are almost constantly in the field, the officers of engineers and topographical engineers rendering valuable service on those duties. I refer you to the reports made by those officers to the chiefs of their own bureaux for the information which is thus procured in relation to the country. An examination of the harbour of Brazos Santiago will be ordered in a few days—as soon as a proper vessel shall become disposable for that service.

In case no movement is made this season for the Rio Grande, I may find it necessary to detach a portion of the army a short distance into the interior, where wood can be more readily procured than here. But in no case do I deem it necessary to



hut the troops. Sheds, with platforms, on which to pitch the tents, were extensively used in camps of position in Florida, and will, I cannot doubt, form a sufficient protection here.

On the hypothesis of an early adjustment of the boundary, and the consequent establishment of permanent frontier posts, I cannot urge too strongly upon the department the necessity of occupying those posts before the warm weather shall set in. A large amount of sickness is, I fear, to be apprehended, with every precaution that can be taken; but the information which I obtain leads me to believe that a summer movement would be attended with great expense of health and life. As in Florida, the winter is the best season for operations in Texas.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Corpus Christi, Texas, February 4, 1846.

SIR: I respectfully acknowledge the communication of the Secretary of War, dated January 13th, and containing the instructions of the President to move forward with my force to the Rio Grande. I shall lose no time in making the necessary preparations for carrying out those instructions.

The occupation of Point Isabel or Brazos Santiago as a depot will be indispensable. That point, and a position on or near the river opposite Matamoros, will, I think, answer all present purposes. At any rate, I shall not separate my force further until the position of affairs shall render it entirely safe to do so.

I propose to abandon this position entirely, as soon after our march as the stores, hospital, &c., can be transferred to St. Joseph's Island. It will be necessary to keep up an establishment at that point for the present, although our supplies will come to Point Isabel direct from New Orleans.

In reply to the call of the Secretary for information as to what means, if any, will be required "to enforce and maintain our common right to navigate" the Rio Grande, I would re-

spectfully state that, until I reach the river and ascertain the condition of things in the frontier States of Mexico, temper of the people, &c., I cannot give any satisfactory answer to the question. I have every reason to believe that the people residing on the river are well disposed towards our government. Our advance to the Rio Grande will itself produce a powerful effect, and it may be that the common navigation of the river will not be disputed. It is very important to us, and will be indispensable when posts are established higher up, as must ultimately be the case.

I shall not call for any militia force in addition to what I already have, unless unforeseen circumstances shall render its employment necessary.

I beg leave again to call the attention of the Department to the necessity of having our movement and position at Brazos Santiago covered by a small armed vessel. I deem this vitally important, and hope it will meet with favourable consideration.

We have no news from the interior of Mexico more recent than that derived from the New Orleans papers of the 26th of January.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Corpus Christi, Texas, February 26, 1846.

SIR: I have to report that the preparations for a forward movement of this command are now nearly completed. The examinations spoken of in my report of the 16th instant have shown the practicability of both routes—by the main land and by Padre Island. The reconnoissance of Padre Island extended to its southern extremity, and included the harbour of Brazos Santiago and Point Isabel; that of the main route reached to a point near the Little Colorado. A depot, with four days' forage, and subsistence for the army, will be thrown forward some forty miles, to the Santa Gertrudes. A detach-

ment of two companies, to establish and cover this depot, will march, on the 28th, under Brevet Major Graham. In about a week thereafter, say the 7th of March, the cavalry will march, to be followed, at intervals of one day, by the brigades of infantry. By the 25th of March, at latest, I hope to be in position on the Rio Grande.

I have taken occasion to represent to some citizens of Matamoros, who were here with a large number of mules for sale, and who are represented to have considerable influence at home, that the United States government, in occupying the Rio Grande, has no motive of hostility towards Mexico, and that the army will, in no case, go beyond the river, unless hostilities should be commenced by the Mexicans themselves; that the Mexicans, living on this side, will not be disturbed in any way by the troops; that they will be protected in all their usages; and that every thing which the army may need will be purchased from them at fair prices. I also stated that, until the matter should be finally adjusted between the two governments, the harbour of Brazos Santiago would be open to the free use of the Mexicans as heretofore. The same views were impressed upon the Mexican custom-house officer at Brazos Santiago by Captain Hardee, who commanded the escort which covered the reconnoissance of Padre Island.

We are entirely without news of interest from the frontier, or the interior of Mexico, our latest date from the capital being the 21st of January, and the same from Vera Cruz.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

These connected and lucid reports of General Taylor's views and acts, during the period that his head-quarters were established at Corpus Christi, supersede any other narrative. He had profited by the time to reduce his force to the most admirable state of discipline; to foster their *esprit du corps*, and especially by his frank and unaffected bearing, to inspire that confidence in himself which contributed so largely to the brilliant achievements of their arms under his command.



## CHAPTER V.

The March from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande commenced—Face of the Country—Sufferings of the Troops—Mexican Demonstration—American Action—Point Isabel invested—The March resumed—Encampment on the Rio Grande—Conference rejected—Entrenchments commenced—Despatches of General Taylor—Ampudia's Magnanimity—A Deserter shot—Fort Brown—Murder of Colonel Cross—Correspondence, Ampudia and Taylor—General Arista—Blockade of the Rio Grande—Correspondence on the Subject—Mexicans crossing the River—Capture of Thornton's Command—Mexican Exultation—Manifesto of Arista—Point Isabel in Danger—Requisition for Volunteers—Captain Walker's First Exploit—Resolution to relieve Point Isabel.

THE Army of Occupation, having spent six months in the monotony of camp duty at Corpus Christi, was rejoiced to be put in motion for new scenes and service. The 12th of March witnessed its entire force moving in a southerly direction over the vast wilderness lying between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. The face of the country, destitute of vegetation except the harsh prairie grass, and unvaried, except by the long undulations, never rising to the dignity of hills, presented nothing to sustain the buoyant spirit with which the march had been commenced, nor to make the encumbered soldier forget his burden. As the Nueces was left daily farther in the rear, the barrenness of the soil increased, and offered neither spring nor stream to appease thirst with a draught of wholesome water. A week had passed in this dreary and painful progress, when green woods appeared to rise in the distance; and, as the weary troops approached them, sheets of bright water varied their welcome shade. But the prospect of both was delusive. The seeming forests shrank into impenetrable clusters of the dwarfish thorn-tree, and the clear lakes were bitter with salt. Privations and fatigue became almost intolerable, under this disappointment.

The stunted groves and the briny pools were passed, and the march continued through another dreary expanse of country. But here the suffering of nine days was forgotten,

in the enjoyment of abundant water. The army reached the Arroya Colorado, a long, narrow inlet of the sea. General Taylor had concentrated his whole force, having been advised that an attempt would be made by the Mexicans to arrest his progress. A body of cavalry appeared, on the opposite bank of the river, and informed him that, if the ford was attempted, the passage would be resisted as an act of hostility. Unaffected by this menace, he formed the army in order, to meet force by force, and commenced the passage, the artillery being posted to protect the ford. The Mexicans, who had made demonstrations of having a large body ready to engage him, disappeared from the opposite bank, which was reached without molestation, General Worth heading the advance.

On the 23d, the march was resumed; and, on the following day, General Taylor reached Point Isabel with the cavalry, while General Worth continued with the infantry on the direct route to Matamoras. While approaching Point Isabel, General Taylor was met by a deputation of citizens, from the Rio Grande, who handed him a protest, signed by the Prefect of the Northern District of the Department of Tamaulipas, against the presence of his army. While the subject was under consideration, he perceived smoke arising from Point Isabel; and, believing that the place had been fired by Mexican authority, he broke off the conference, and dismissed the deputation, with the promise of an answer when he should arrive on the banks of the Rio Grande. Point Isabel, an insignificant post, with a few mean houses, had been selected as a depot for military stores, being the nearest port to Matamoras on the north. To preserve its buildings, and hold possession of them, was, therefore, an object of moment to the commander. The fire, which had made but little progress, was arrested by the dragoons under Col. Twiggs, detached for the purpose; and, at the moment of General Taylor's arrival, the supplies, which he had sent from Corpus Christi by water, also arrived, fortunately answering his expectations.

The arrangements at this post being satisfactorily made, the general, with the cavalry, resumed the march towards Matamo-

ros, and was joined by General Worth's command, which had encamped on the road. Another week brought the Rio Grande in sight, the army having passed over the ground soon afterwards rendered famous by the victories of the 8th and 9th of May. The exhausted troops, on the 28th of March, pitched their tents on the left bank of the beautiful river; and, amidst the early vegetation of a tropical spring, reposed, for a time, from their labours. General Worth and his staff were, immediately, instructed by General Taylor to cross the river, with despatches for the Mexican commander, and for the civil magistrates. The purpose was defeated alike by the ceremonious requisitions of these parties, and by the determination of the Mexican general, particularly, to consider the presence of the Americans an aggressive and hostile act. General Taylor, accordingly, began to place himself in a position to resist any attack. The topographical corps made the requisite observations of the country, and the site of permanent defences being selected, the works were commenced, and prosecuted with the utmost diligence. The Mexicans, meanwhile, looked supinely on. Within shot of their city, the American flag was floating, and they had declared all under it to be open enemies. Yet they allowed the golden opportunity to pass, when the latter were encamped in the open field, and when, if ever, an assault might have been successful.

From the day of leaving Corpus Christi until the encampment on the Rio Grande, the following despatches were written by General Taylor :

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Corpus Christi, Texas, March 8, 1846.

SIR: I respectfully report that the advance of the army, composed of the cavalry and Major Ringgold's light artillery, the whole under the command of Colonel Twiggs, took up the line of march this morning in the direction of Matamoros, its strength being 23 officers and 378 men. The advance will be followed in succession by the brigades of infantry, the last brigade marching on the 11th instant. The roads are in good



order, the weather fine, and the troops in excellent condition for service.

Major Munroe will embark for Brazos Santiago in season to reach that harbour about the time the army will be in the vicinity of Point Isabel. He takes with him a siege train and a field battery. Captain Sanders, of the engineers, the officers of ordnance, and the pay department, accompany Major Munroe.

The movement by water, to Brazos Santiago, will be covered by the revenue cutter "Woodbury," Captain Foster, whose commander has kindly placed her at my disposal for this service.

All proper arrangements have been made by the staff departments for supplying the army on the route, as well as establishing a depot for its further wants at Point Isabel.

I have deemed it proper to cause my "orders" No. 30, to be translated into Spanish, and circulated on the Rio Grande. Sixty copies have already been sent in advance of the army to Matamoros, Camargo, and Mier. This form of giving publicity to the spirit which actuates our movement in occupying the country, I thought preferable to a proclamation. I trust the order itself will meet the approval of the department. A few copies of the translation are herewith enclosed.

I shall again communicate with general head-quarters before I march, and I expect to do so at least once on the route.

My head-quarters will march with the rear brigade, but will soon pass to the advance of the army.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Corpus Christi, March 8, 1846.

Order No. 30.

The army of occupation of Texas being now about to take a position upon the left bank of the Rio Grande, under the orders of the Executive of the United States, the general-in-

chief desires to express the hope that the movement will be advantageous to all concerned ; and with the object of attaining this laudable end, he has ordered all under his command to observe, with the most scrupulous respect, the rights of all the inhabitants who may be found in peaceful prosecution of their respective occupations, as well on the left as on the right side of the Rio Grande. Under no pretext, nor in any way, will any interference be allowed with the civil rights or religious privileges of the inhabitants ; but the utmost respect for them will be maintained.

Whatsoever may be needed for the use of the army will be bought by the proper surveyor, and paid for at the highest prices. The general-in-chief has the satisfaction to say that he confides in the patriotism and discipline of the army under his command, and that he feels sure that his orders will be obeyed with the utmost exactness.

Z. TAYLOR,  
Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Camp at "El Sauce," 119 miles from Corpus Christi, March 18, 1846.

SIR: I avail myself of a chance opportunity to Corpus Christi to report that I have advanced to this point with the cavalry and 1st brigade of infantry. The 2d brigade encamps to-night about seven miles in my rear ; the 3d brigade about nineteen. I shall concentrate all my force on reaching the Little Colorado, thirteen miles in my front, so as to be prepared for any contingency. I am happy to say that all the corps of the army are in fine condition and spirits, equal to any service that may be before them.

Within the last two days, our advance has met with small armed parties of Mexicans, who seemed disposed to avoid us. They were, doubtless, thrown out to get information of our advance.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,  
Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Point Isabel, March 25, 1846.

SIR: I respectfully report that I marched on the morning of the 23d instant with the entire army from the camp, near the Colorado, in the order prescribed in my order No. 35, herewith enclosed. After a march of fifteen miles, we reached, on the morning of the 24th, a point on the route from Matamoros to Point Isabel, eighteen miles from the former and ten from the latter place. I here left the infantry brigades under Brigadier General Worth, with instructions to proceed in the direction of Matamoros until he came to a suitable position for encampment, where he would halt, holding the route in observation, while I proceed with the cavalry to this point to communicate with our transports, supposed to have arrived in the harbour, and make the necessary arrangements for the establishment and defence of a depot.

While on my way hither, our column was approached by a party on its right flank, bearing a white flag. It proved to be a civil deputation from Matamoros, desiring an interview with me. I informed them that I would halt at the first suitable place on the road and afford them the desired interview. It was, however, found necessary, from the want of water, to continue the route to this place. The deputation halted while yet some miles from Point Isabel, declining to come further, and sent me a formal protest of the prefect of the northern district of Tamaulipas against our occupation of the country, which I enclose herewith. At this moment it was discovered that the buildings at Point Isabel were in flames. I then informed the bearer of the protest that I would answer it when opposite Matamoros, and dismissed the deputation. I considered the conflagration before my eyes as a decided evidence of hostility, and was not willing to be trifled with any longer, particularly as I had reason to believe that the prefect, in making this protest, was but a tool of the military authorities at Matamoros.

The advance of the cavalry fortunately arrived here in season



to arrest the fire, which consumed but three or four houses. The port captain, who committed the act under the orders, it is said, of General Mejia, had made his escape before its arrival. We found two or three inoffensive Mexicans here, the rest having left for Matamoros.

I was gratified to find that the water expedition had exactly answered to our land movement—the steamers arriving in the harbour only two or three hours before we reached Point Isabel, with the other transports close in their rear. The “Porpoise” and “Lawrence,” brigs of war, and cutter “Woodbury,” are lying outside. I have thought it necessary to order Captain Porter’s company to this place to reinforce Major Munroe. Our great depot must be here, and it is very important to secure it against any enterprise of the enemy. The engineer officers are now examining the ground with a view to tracing lines of defence and strengthening the position.

As soon as a sufficient amount of supplies can be thrown forward toward Matamoros, I shall march in the direction of that town and occupy a position as near it as circumstances will permit.

I enclose a sketch prepared by my aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Eaton, exhibiting the route of march since leaving the Colorado, and the bearings of important points.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

The following correspondence elucidates the positions of the Mexican local authorities, and of General Taylor, respectively, upon his arrival on the Rio Grande.

Office of the Prefect of the Northern District of the Department of Tamaulipas.  
God and Liberty!

Santa Rita, March 23, 1846.

SIR: Although the pending question respecting the annexation of the department of Texas to the United States is subject to the decision of the supreme government of Mexico, the fact

of the advance of the army, under your excellency's orders, over the line occupied by you at Corpus Christi, places me under the necessity, as the chief political authority of the northern district of Tamaulipas, to address you, as I have now the honour to do, through the commissioners, who will place this in your hands, and to inform you that the people, under this prefecture, being justly alarmed at the invasion of an army, which, without any previous declaration of war, and without announcing explicitly the object proposed by it, comes to occupy a territory which never belonged to the insurgent province, cannot regard with indifference a proceeding so contrary to the conduct observed towards each other by civilized nations, and to the clearest principles of the law of nations; that, directed by honour and patriotism, and certain that nothing has been said officially by the cabinet of the Union to the Mexican government, respecting the extension of the limits of Texas to the left bank of the Rio Bravo, trusting in the well-known justice of their cause, and using their natural right of defence, they (the citizens of this district) protest, in the most solemn manner, that neither now nor at any time do they, or will they, consent to separate themselves from the Mexican republic, and to unite themselves with the United States, and that they are resolved to carry this firm determination into effect, resisting, so far as their strength will enable them, at all times and places, until the army under your excellency's orders shall recede and occupy its former positions; because, so long as it remains within the territory of Tamaulipas, the inhabitants must consider that whatsoever protestations of peace may be made, hostilities have been openly commenced by your excellency, the lamentable consequences of which will rest before the world exclusively on the heads of the invaders.

I have the honour to say this to your excellency, with the object indicated, and to assure you of my consideration and esteem.

JENES CARDENAS.

JUAN JOSE PINEDA.

To General Z. Taylor, &c.

Camp on the left bank of the Rio Grande.  
Opposite Matamoros, March 29, 1846.

SIR: I have the honour to report that I arrived at this camp yesterday with the forces under my command, no resistance having been offered to my advance to the banks of the river, nor any act of hostility committed by the Mexicans, except the capture of two of our dragoons, sent forward from the advanced guard. I deem it possible that these two men may have deserted to the enemy, as one of them, at least, bears a bad character. Our approach seems to have created much excitement in Matamoros, and a great deal of activity has been displayed since our arrival in the preparation of batteries. The left bank is now under reconnoissance of our engineer officers, and I shall lose no time in strengthening our position by such defensive works as may be necessary, employing for that purpose a portion of the heavy guns brought round by sea.

The attitude of the Mexicans is so far decidedly hostile. An interview has been held, by my direction, with the military authorities in Matamoros, but with no satisfactory result.

Under this state of things, I must again and urgently call your attention to the necessity of speedily sending recruits to this army.

The militia of Texas are so remote from the border that we cannot depend upon their aid.

The strength gained by filling up the regiments here, even to the present feeble establishment, would be of very great importance.

I respectfully enclose a field report of the force now in this camp.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

A few days after the tents of the Army of Occupation had been pitched on the Rio Grande, sufficed for the partial erection of defensive works. Meanwhile, General Ampudia was



on his march to Matamoros to take command of the Mexican forces in that city. He announced his presence, by the circulation, in the American camp, of a document addressed to the English and Irish soldiers. It informed them, that the United States was guilty of barbarous acts of aggression against "the magnanimous Mexican nation;" and that the government existing under the stripes and stars, was unworthy of the designation of Christian. The former subjects of Great Britain were reminded of their nativity, and assured that the American government, by its course with regard to Oregon, was then seeking to create a rupture with their parent country. For these reasons, they were exhorted to take refuge in the Mexican ranks, and were guarantied "upon honour," good treatment, and safe escort to the beautiful capital of Mexico. The address concluded with these words: "Germans, French, Poles, and individuals of other nations! Separate yourselves from the Yankees, and do not contribute to defend a robbery and usurpation which, be assured, the civilized nations of Europe look on with the utmost indignation. Come, therefore, and array yourselves under the tri-coloured flag, in the confidence that the God of armies protects it, and that it will protect you equally with the English!" This seductive appeal was not without effect upon a few romantic individuals, who, as opportunity offered, attempted to cross the river, and throw themselves into the arms of the magnanimous Mexican nation. In the effort, a small number succeeded; but the majority was drowned, and one man, who had reached the opposite bank and was ascending it, was shot, at the distance of two hundred yards, by a sentinel, and fell dead in the sight of his old and his new friends. The latter buried him respectfully, and his melancholy fate proved a salutary lesson to the former.

By the 10th of April, considerable progress had been made in the works intended for the reception of ordnance expected from Point Isabel, and in the principal intrenchment, which afterwards received the name of Fort Brown. The latter was extensive, capable of accommodating about two thousand men. It had six bastions, and the guns on the river side

commanded the town of Matamoros. The work was planned and executed under the direction of Captain Mansfield, of the engineer corps.

This day, the 10th of April, was signalized by the first shedding of American blood by Mexican hands. Colonel Cross, Deputy Quarter Master General, had ridden out, as was his custom, for exercise. Night coming on, he did not return, and alarm began to be felt for his safety. Attached to the Mexican army, were then, as now, irresponsible parties of cavalry, whose business was rather assassination and robbery, than honourable warfare. It was feared, that Colonel Cross had fallen a victim to one of these bands, and ten days afterwards his remains were found and identified. Information was then received, which left no reasonable doubt that such had been the mode of his death. His memory was honoured, by the commander-in-chief, by a funeral becoming his rank.

General Ampudia arrived in Matamoros on the 11th. He was welcomed by his countrymen; and, to the army under Taylor, his coming was hailed as the signal of definite action on the part of Mexico. The suspense did not last long. On the following morning, a military deputation, from General Ampudia, delivered the subjoined letter to General Taylor:—

Head Quarters at Matamoros, 2 o'clock P. M.

Fourth Military Division,  
General-in-Chief.

} April 12, 1846.

God and Liberty !

To explain to you the many grounds for the just grievances felt by the Mexican nation, caused by the United States government, would be a loss of time, and an insult to your good sense; I, therefore, pass at once to such explanation as I consider of absolute necessity.

Your government, in an incredible manner—you will even permit me to say an extravagant one, if the usages, or general rules established and received among all civilized nations are regarded—has not only insulted, but has exasperated the Mexican nation, bearing its conquering banner to the left bank of

the Rio Bravo del Norte ; and in this case, by explicit and definitive orders of my government, which neither can, will, nor should receive new outrages, I require you in all form, and at latest in the peremptory term of twenty-four hours, to break up your camp and retire to the other bank of the Nueces river, while our governments are regulating the pending question in relation to Texas. If you insist on remaining upon the soil of the department of Tamaulipas, it will clearly result that arms, and arms alone, must decide the question ; and, in that case, I advise you that we accept the war to which, with so much injustice on your part, you provoke us, and that, on our part, this war shall be conducted conformably to the principles established by the most civilized nations ; that is to say, that the law of nations and of war shall be the guide of my operations ; trusting that on your part the same will be observed.

With this view, I tender you the considerations due to your person and respectable office.

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

Senor General-in-Chief of the U. S. Army,  
Don Z. TAYLOR.

To this peremptory requisition General Taylor replied :

Head Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camp near Matamoros, Texas, April 12, 1846.

SENOR : I have had the honour to receive your note of this date, in which you summon me to withdraw the forces under my command from their present position, and beyond the river Nueces, until the pending question between our governments, relative to the limits of Texas, shall be settled.

I need hardly advise you that, charged as I am, in only a military capacity, with the performance of specific duties, I cannot enter into a discussion of the international question involved in the advance of the American army. You will, however, permit me to say, that the government of the United States has constantly sought a settlement, by negotiation, of the question of boundary ; that an envoy was despatched to Mexico for that purpose, and that up to the most recent dates



said envoy had not been received by the actual Mexican government, if indeed he has not received his passports and left the republic. In the mean time, I have been ordered to occupy the country up to the left bank of the Rio Grande, until the boundary shall be definitely settled. In carrying out these instructions I have carefully abstained from all acts of hostility, obeying, in this regard, not only the letter of my instructions, but the plain dictates of justice and humanity.

The instructions under which I am acting will not permit me to retrograde from the position I now occupy. In view of the relations between our respective governments, and the individual suffering which may result, I regret the alternative which you offer; but, at the same time, wish it understood that I shall by no means avoid such alternative, leaving the responsibility with those who rashly commence hostilities. In conclusion, you will permit me to give the assurance that on my part the laws and customs of war among civilized nations shall be carefully observed.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR.

Senor General D. PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

To confirm these declarations, General Taylor continued to fortify his camp, and to make every disposition to resist an attack. Ampudia soon gave place, as commanding officer at Matamoros, to General Arista, commander-in-chief of the Northern Division of the Mexican army. The reported accessions to its force also created new expectations in the American camp that a decisive demonstration would soon be made against it. On the 19th, intelligence was brought General Taylor of the arrival of two vessels off the mouth of the Rio Grande with supplies for the Mexicans in Matamoros. He at once declared a blockade of the river, which he enforced by ordering the United States Brig Lawrence, and a revenue cutter, to guard its mouth. This measure elicited another note from Ampudia, in which, after mentioning the fact of the ves-

sels being sent to Brazos Santiago, he proceeds in the following strain :

“ The cargo of one of them is composed in great part, and of the other entirely, of provisions, which the contractors, charged with providing for the army under my orders, had procured to fulfil the obligations of their contracts. You have taken possession of these provisions by force, and against the will of the proprietors, one of whom is vice-consul of her Catholic Majesty, and the other of her Britannic Majesty ; and whose rights, in place of being rigorously respected, as was proffered, and as was to be hoped from the observance of the principles which govern among civilized nations, have, on the contrary, been violated in the most extraordinary manner, opposed to the guarantee and respect due to private property.

“ Nothing can have authorized you in such a course. The commerce of nations is not suspended or interrupted, except in consequence of a solemn declaration of blockade, communicated and established in the form prescribed by international law. Nevertheless, you have infringed these rules ; and, by an act which can never be viewed favourably to the United States government, have hindered the entrance to a Mexican port of vessels bound to it, under the confidence that commerce would not be interrupted. My duties do not allow me to consent to this new species of hostility, and they constrain me to require of you, not only that the vessels taken by force to Brazos Santiago shall be at liberty to return to the mouth of the river, but the restoration of all the provisions which, besides belonging to private contractors, were destined for the troops on this frontier. I consider it useless to inculcate the justice of this demand, and the results which may follow an unlooked-for refusal.

“ I have also understood that two Mexicans, carried down in a boat by the current of the river near one of the advanced posts of your camp, were detained, after being fired upon, and that they are still kept and treated as prisoners. The individuals in question do not belong to the army, and this circumstance exempts them from the laws of war. I therefore hope

that you will place them absolutely at liberty, as I cannot be persuaded that you pretend to extend to persons not military the consequences of an invasion, which, without employing this means of rigour against unarmed citizens, is marked in itself with the seal of universal reprobation."

To this note General Taylor took occasion to reply at some length, in a strain both exculpatory, as regarded his own course, and declaratory of the exceptionable conduct of the Mexicans. After acknowledging Ampudia's note, he continues as follows :

"After all that has passed since the American army first approached the Rio Bravo, I am certainly surprised that you should complain of a measure which is no other than a natural result of the state of war so much insisted upon by the Mexican authorities as actually existing at this time. You will excuse me for recalling a few circumstances to show that this state of war has not been sought by the American army, but has been forced upon it, and that the exercise of the rights incident to such a state cannot be made a subject of complaint.

"On breaking up my camp at Corpus Christi, and moving forward with the army under my orders to occupy the left bank of the Rio Bravo, it was my earnest desire to execute my instructions in a pacific manner: to observe the utmost regard for the personal rights of all citizens residing on the left bank of the river, and to take care that the religion and customs of the people should suffer no violation. With this view, and to quiet the minds of the inhabitants, I issued orders to the army, enjoining a strict observance of the rights and interests of all Mexicans residing on the river, and caused said orders to be translated into Spanish, and circulated in the several towns on the Bravo. These orders announced the spirit in which we proposed to occupy the country, and I am proud to say that up to this moment the same spirit has controlled the operations of the army. On reaching the Arroyo Colorado I was informed by a Mexican officer that the order in question had been received in Matamoros: but was told, at the same time, that if I attempted to cross the river it would be regarded as a declara-



tion of war. Again, on my march to Frontone\* I was met by a deputation of the civil authorities of Matamoros, protesting against my occupation of a portion of the department of Tamaulipas, and declaring that if the army was not at once withdrawn, war would result. While this communication was in my hands, it was discovered that the village of Frontone had been set on fire and abandoned. I viewed this as a direct act of war, and informed the deputation that their communication would be answered by me when opposite Matamoros, which was done in respectful terms. On reaching the river I despatched an officer, high in rank, to convey to the commanding general in Matamoros the expression of my desire for amicable relations, and my willingness to leave open to the use of the citizens of Matamoros the port of Brazos Santiago until the question of boundary should be definitively settled. This officer received for reply, from the officer selected to confer with him, that my advance to the Rio Bravo was considered as a veritable act of war, and he was absolutely refused an interview with the American consul, in itself an act incompatible with a state of peace.

“Notwithstanding these repeated assurances on the part of the Mexican authorities, and notwithstanding the most obviously hostile preparations on the right bank of the river, accompanied by a rigid non-intercourse, I carefully abstained from any act of hostility—determined that the onus of producing an actual state of hostilities should not rest with me. Our relations remained in this state until I had the honour to receive your note of the 12th instant, in which you denounce war as the alternative of my remaining in this position. As I could not, under my instructions, recede from my position, I accepted the alternative you offered me, and made all my dispositions to meet it suitably. But, still willing to adopt milder measures before proceeding to others, I contented myself in the first instance with ordering a blockade of the mouth of the Rio Bravo by the naval forces under my orders—a proceeding perfectly consonant with the state of war so often declared to exist, and which you acknowledge in your note of the 16th instant, rela-

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\* The town at Point Isabel.

tive to the late Col. Cross. If this measure seem oppressive, I wish it borne in mind that it has been forced upon me by the course you have seen fit to adopt. I have reported this blockade to my government, and shall not remove it until I receive instructions to that effect, unless, indeed, you desire an armistice pending the final settlement of the question between the governments, or until war shall be formally declared by either, in which case I shall cheerfully open the river. In regard to the consequences you mention as resulting from a refusal to remove the blockade, I beg you to understand that I am prepared for them, be they what they may.

“In regard to the particular vessels referred to in your communication, I have the honour to advise you that, in pursuance of my orders, two American schooners, bound for Matamoros, were warned off on the 17th instant, when near the mouth of the river, and put to sea, returning probably to New Orleans. They were not seized, or their cargoes disturbed in any way, nor have they been in the harbour of Brazos Santiago to my knowledge. A Mexican schooner, understood to be the “Junata,” was in or off that harbour when my instructions to block the river were issued, but was driven to sea in a gale, since which time I have had no report concerning her. Since the receipt of your communication, I have learned that two persons, sent to the mouth of the river to procure information respecting this vessel, proceeded thence to Brazos Santiago, when they were taken up and detained by the officer in command, until my orders could be received. I shall order their immediate release. A letter from one of them to the Spanish vice-consul is respectfully transmitted herewith.

“In relation to the Mexicans said to have drifted down the river in a boat, and to be prisoners at this time in my camp, I have the pleasure to inform you that no such persons have been taken prisoners or are now detained by my authority. The boat in question was carried down empty by the current of the river, and drifted ashore near one of our pickets and was secured by the guard. Some time afterwards an attempt was made to recover the boat under the cover of the darkness; the

individuals concerned were hailed by the guard, and, failing to answer, were fired upon as a matter of course. What became of them is not known, as no trace of them could be discovered on the following morning. The officer of the Mexican guard directly opposite was informed next day that the boat would be returned on proper application to me, and I have now only to repeat that assurance.

“In conclusion, I take leave to state that I consider the tone of your communication highly exceptionable, where you stigmatise the movement of the army under my orders as “marked with the seal of universal reprobation.” You must be aware that such language is not respectful in itself, either to me or my government; and while I observe in my own correspondence the courtesy due to your high position, and to the magnitude of the interests with which we are respectively charged, I shall expect the same in return.”

The position of the Army of Occupation began now to appear painfully critical. Daily intelligence was received of the augmentation of the Mexican forces. To this was added, on the 24th, rumours that they were crossing the river, to the number of three thousand, above and below the camp, with the design of marching against Point Isabel, and thus cutting off the supplies at that depot on which the army was dependent. To ascertain the truth of these reports, General Taylor ordered Captain Ker, with a squadron of dragoons, to reconnoitre between the camp and the mouth of the river, while another squadron, under Captain Thornton, was sent above for the same object. The former returned without having learned anything to confirm the unfavourable reports. The mission of the latter was less fortunate. Having ascended the river bank about twenty-five miles, he halted in consequence of the refusal of his guide to proceed, the latter declaring that large bodies of Mexican troops were in the neighbourhood. Doubting the statement, however, Captain Thornton again moved forward; and, stopping at a farm-house, the court of which was surrounded by a chapparal hedge, to make some enquiry, he was suddenly surrounded by a large body of Mexican in-



fantry and cavalry. A charge through it was attempted, but without success. Captain Thornton, by an extraordinary leap of his horse, which was wounded at the moment by a discharge of musketry, cleared the hedge. His command was unable to follow; and the second officer, Captain Hardee, after an attempt to retreat across the river, was obliged to surrender the party prisoners of war. Lieutenant G. T. Mason, a promising young officer, was killed in this affair. The prisoners were taken to Matamoros, and well treated. For some time, Captain Thornton was missing; but, as was afterwards learned from him, his horse had fallen, and injured him, and, when endeavouring to return to the camp on foot, he was taken within a few miles of it, and joined his men, a prisoner, in Matamoros. The capture of this handful of dragoons, was the occasion of extraordinary exultation on the part of the host of their conquerors. General Arista thus triumphantly congratulated General Torrejon, who commanded in the affair:

“This has been a day of rejoicing to all the Division of the North, it having this day been known of the triumph achieved by the brigade which your excellency so worthily commands. The rejoiced country will doubtless celebrate this preliminary of glorious deeds that her happy sons will in future present to her. Your excellency will communicate to your brave soldiers that I have seen with the greatest pleasure their valiant behaviour, and that I await for the detailed despatch to elevate it to the knowledge of the supreme government, so that the nation may learn the triumph of your arms.”

On the day that Thornton's unfortunate party had left the camp, a messenger from General Arista brought to General Taylor the following manifesto, addressed on the cover to the commander-in-chief of the United States forces:—

“The course of events, since the annexation of Texas to the United States was declared, has been so clearly hostile to Mexico, and so foreign to the dignity and principles which the Americans have proclaimed to the world, that we came to the conclusion, that their policy has been changed, and that

their moderation is turned into a desire of aggrandizement, enriching themselves by humiliating their neighbours.

“The respect and consideration that friendly nations show to each other have been trampled upon, by which reason, the justice and excessive moderation of Mexico shine forth still more. Pressed and forced into war, we enter into a struggle, which cannot be avoided, without failing in what is most sacred to man.

“Political discussions do not appertain to military men, but to diplomatic agents. To us belongs the part to act, without it occasioning any surprise that the troops under my command should not wait for anything else to give battle.

“We Mexicans have been calumniated as barbarous, in the most caustic and unjust terms. The occasion has arrived to show what we are; and, I do not believe that, in the troops under my command, there will be any cause to confirm such suppositions, as they will render conspicuous the feelings of humanity and generosity which distinguish them.

“For this time, I have the honour to offer your excellency my great consideration.

“MARIANO ARISTA.

“God and Liberty!

“Head Quarters, Matamoros, April 24, 1846.”

A private note to General Taylor accompanied this formal expression of modest assurance, in which the writer, after paying a compliment to General Taylor's urbanity, pledged himself, personally, that “justice and love of humanity” should be found in all his acts.

The apprehensions already noticed for the safety of the little army on the banks of the Rio Grande were increased, by the fact, that bodies of Mexican troops, thrown between it and Point Isabel, had wholly debarred all intercommunication. Towards the close of April, there were reports of a contemplated attack on this place. General Taylor shared the anxiety on the latter account—and he accordingly sent a despatch to the governors of Louisiana and Texas, asking an immediate rein-

forcement of four regiments of volunteers from each state. From the time he had left Point Isabel, while on the march from Corpus Christi, Major Munroe, who was in command of that station, had been reinforced by a small body of Texan volunteers. Captain Walker, with a company of rangers, was among them, and occasion now offered for him to commence the career, in the Mexican war, which he has since followed with singular credit to his patriotism and courage. A wagon train, under the escort of Captain Walker, having been driven back, with severe loss, while on the way from Point Isabel to the camp, by a large body of Mexican troops, who pursued the fugitive party to the neighbourhood of the former post, Major Munroe was anxious to give General Taylor immediate advice of the fact. To this perilous service, Captain Walker volunteered, and safely accomplished it. The danger which menaced Point Isabel was now too imminent to admit delay in relieving it, and General Taylor, therefore, resolved on marching thither, immediately, with his whole force, except the seventh regiment of infantry, and Captain Bragg's and Captain Lowd's companies of artillery, which were to occupy Fort Brown, then sufficiently complete to sustain a bombardment. The cost of this movement was fully counted by the general ;—but he was prepared for any exigency, and resolved to meet any force which the enemy might bring against him.



## CHAPTER VI.

Rejoicing in Matamoras—Arista, with his Forces, crosses the River—His Disappointment at Taylor's Escape—Mexican Narrative of both Movements—Ardour of the Mexicans—Terror of the Americans—Their Duplicity and Treachery—Taylor's Ignominy—Bombardment of Fort Brown—Taylor's Instructions—May's and Walker's Mission—New Mexican Batteries—Their Fire not returned—Mexican Account of the Bombardment—Eternal Honour of Mexican Artillery-men—Barbarous Pleasure of the Americans—Their Cowardice and Stupidity—Mexican Triumph—American Loss—Mexican Superiority—Continuation of the Bombardment—Death of Major Brown—New Mexican Batteries—Captain Hawkins summoned to Surrender—Arista's modest Letter—Hawkins' presumptuous Answer—Want of Ammunition—Preparations for an Assault—Weariness of the Men in the Fort—Signals of Relief.

THE first of May, 1846, was a day of great exultation among the good people of Matamoras. All classes forsook their occupations, and gathered on the banks of the river. The merry bells were rung, and public joy was manifested by all modes known to the sanguine denizens of a tropical town. It so happened, that his excellency, Don Mariano Arista, general-in-chief of the division of the north, had chosen the same bright morning to order a large body of his troops across the Rio Grande, that General Taylor had chosen to march to the relief of Point Isabel. A retrograde movement, on the part of the Americans, at any moment, would have been hailed by their confident neighbours as evidence of doubt and apprehension. But occurring simultaneously with the advance of their own forces to the left side of the river, the cheering conclusion was drawn, that the terror-stricken army of the United States was flying before the brilliant legions of Mexico. The latter had selected a ford for crossing, several miles above the camp of the former, and were, therefore, so far in the rear of the supposed fugitives, that their retreat could not be cut off. This was a disappointment; but the anxiety to chastise the invaders was in a measure allayed, by the circumstance, that General Taylor, in his precipitous flight, had left a small body of men in Fort Brown. To reduce these to the humiliation of sur-

rendering would be an easy and a glorious task ; so thought his excellency (General Arista) and his worthy compatriots. Perhaps the best illustration of this comfortable assurance is found in the annexed extract of a document, published in *El Monitor Republicano*, of Matamoros, on the 4th of May.

“ On the first of this month, at eleven o'clock in the morning, the general-in-chief left this place to join the army, who, several hours before, had left with the intention of crossing the river at a short distance from the camp of the enemy. In consequence of the orders given, so that this dangerous operation might be performed with due security, and according to the rules of military art, when our troops arrived at the spot designated for the crossing of the river, the left bank was already occupied by General D. Anastasio Torrejon, with all the force under his command. The enthusiasm of our soldiers to conquer the obstacles which separated them from the enemy was so great, that they showed themselves impatient of the delay occasioned by the bad condition of some of the flat-boats, which had been very much injured in the transportation by land, and could not be used, as they would fill up with water as soon as they were launched. In spite of that obstacle, the work went on with such activity, and so great was the ardour of the most excellent general-in-chief, whose orders were obeyed with the greatest promptness and precision, that a few hours were sufficient to transport, to the opposite bank of the Bravo, a strong division, with all its artillery and train.

“ This rapid and well-combined movement ought to have proved to the invaders not only that the Mexicans possess instruction and aptness for war, but that those qualities are now brought forth by the purest patriotism. The Northern Division, fearless of fatigue, and levelling all difficulties, ran to seek an enemy who, well sheltered under parapets, and defended with guns of a large calibre, could wait for the attack with indisputable advantage. With deep trenches, with a multitude of fortifications, the defence was easy against those who presented themselves with their naked breasts.

“ But General Taylor dared not resist the valour and enthu-

siasm of the sons of Mexico. Well did he foresee the intrepidity with which our soldiers would rush against the usurpers of the national territory. Well did he know the many injuries which were to be avenged by those who had taken up arms, not to aggrandize themselves with the spoils of the property of others, but to maintain the independence of their country. Well did he know, we repeat it, that the Mexicans would be stopped neither by trenches, or fortresses, or large artillery. Thus it was that the chief of the American forces, frightened as soon as he perceived from the situation and proximity of his camp, that our army were preparing to cross the river, left with precipitation for Point Isabel, with almost all his troops, eight pieces of artillery, and a few wagons. Their march was observed from our position, and the most excellent General D. Francisco Mejia immediately sent an express extraordinary to communicate the news to the most excellent general-in-chief. Here let me pay to our brave men the tribute which they deserve. The express verbally informed some of the troops, which had not yet arrived at the ford, of the escape of the Americans; in one instant, all the soldiers spontaneously crossed the river, almost racing one with another. Such was the ardour with which they crossed the river to attack the enemy.

“The terror and haste with which the latter fled to the fort, to shut themselves up in it and avoid a conflict, frustrated the active measures of the most excellent Senor General Arista, which were to order the cavalry to advance in the plain and cut off the flight of the fugitives. But it was not possible to do so, notwithstanding their forced march during the night. General Taylor left his camp at two o'clock in the afternoon, and, as fear has wings, he succeeded in shutting himself up in the fort. When our cavalry reached the point where they were to detain him, he had already passed, and was several leagues ahead. Great was the sorrow of our brave men not to have been able to meet the enemy face to face; their defeat was certain, and the main body of that invading army, who thought that they inspired the Mexicans with so much respect, would



have disappeared in the first important battle. But there was some fighting to be done; and the Americans do not know how to use other arms but those of duplicity and treachery. Why did they not remain with firmness under their colours? Why did they abandon the ground which they pretend to usurp with such iniquity? Thus has an honourable general kept his word. Had not General Taylor said, in all his communications, that he was prepared to repel all hostilities? Why, then, does he fly in so cowardly a manner to shut himself up at the Point? The commander-in-chief of the American army has covered himself with opprobrium and ignominy in sacrificing a part of his forces, whom he left in the fortifications, to save himself; for it is certain that he will not return to their assistance—not that he is ignorant of their peril, but he calculates that this would be greater if he had the temerity of attempting to resist the Mexican lances and bayonets in the open plain.”

Before the publication of this bold and sarcastic paper, General Taylor, fortunately for his feelings as well as his security, had reached Point Isabel. Meanwhile, on the 3d instant, a Mexican battery had opened a fire upon Fort Brown, which its brave commander, Major Jacob Brown, returned so effectually that the guns of the former were very speedily silenced. Before leaving the fort, General Taylor had satisfied himself of its ability to sustain a bombardment, but to be prepared for its relief, he ordered that, in case of an assault, heavy signal guns should be fired at stated intervals, which would apprise him at Point Isabel of its condition. When the firing of the Mexican guns, on the 3d, was heard at the latter place, General Taylor's anxiety to know their effect, and the prospect of the fort sustaining the bombardment, determined him to despatch a troop of horse to ascertain these facts. One hundred dragoons under Captain May, and ten Texan Rangers under Captain Walker, were detailed for this duty, with orders to the former to proceed within six miles of the fort, (carefully avoiding the enemy, who then overran the whole intermediate country,) and there to remain, if circumstances permitted, while the Rangers, under cover of the night, should continue

on to the fort, and communicate with Major Brown. This dangerous service was safely and satisfactorily performed, although Captain Walker was obliged to return to Point Isabel with no other force than his own ten men.

The fire from the Mexican batteries, erected at different points, having been resumed, Major Brown found that his six-pounders, owing to the distance, did little execution, and wishing to husband his ammunition, and the strength of his men, the enemy's fire was not returned. This fact was too flattering to their pride and hopes to be properly understood; and the subjoined bulletin of the first day's work was issued from the Matamoras press, and received with becoming delight and admiration by the populace.

“But let us relate the glorious events of yesterday. As Aurora dawned, we began to fire from our ramparts on the fortifications of the enemy, and the thunder of Mexican cannon was saluted by the reveille from every point of our line, by the bell of the parochial church, and by the *vivas* of the inhabitants of Matamoras. In a moment the streets were filled, and all were rejoiced to see at last the hour arrived, when we were to give a terrible lesson to the American camp, whose odious presence could no longer be tolerated. The enemy answered, but they were soon convinced that their artillery, although of a superior calibre, could not compete with ours. After a fire of five hours, our ramparts remained immovable, on account of the solidity of their construction, and the intelligence with which the rules of art had been observed. The same did not happen to the American fortifications, whose bastions were so completely demolished, that towards eleven o'clock in the morning their artillery ceased to play, and their fire was hushed. We continued to fire with activity during the day, without the enemy's daring to respond to us, because the parapets under which they would shelter themselves being destroyed, they had not courage to load their guns, which remained uncovered. This result shows us of what in reality consists the exalted skill of the American artillerists. They have eighteen-pounders, and we have nothing larger than eight-pounders; and yet the

intelligence and practice of the Mexicans sufficed to conquer those who had superior arms. Unequalled glory and eternal honour to our brave artillerymen.

“The enemy, in their impotent rage, and before they concealed their shame behind the most distant parapets, had the barbarous pleasure of aiming their guns towards the city, to destroy its edifices, as it was not in their power to destroy the fortifications from which they received so much injury. This wicked revenge, which only springs from cowardly and miserable souls, did not meet with the success expected by those who so unworthily adorn themselves with the title of *savans* and philanthropists. Their stupidity was equal to their wickedness. Almost all the balls passed too high; and those which touched the houses, although they were eighteen-pounders, did not cause any other mischief but that of piercing one or two walls. If those who conceived the infamous design of destroying Matamoros, had seen the contemptuous laughter with which the owners of those houses showed their indifference for the losses which they might sustain, they would have admired the patriotism and disinterestedness of the Mexicans, always ready to undergo the greatest sacrifices, when it is necessary to maintain their nationality and independence. The glorious 3d of May is another brilliant testimony of this truth; through the thickest of the firing, one could remark the most ardent enthusiasm on all faces, and hardly had a ball fallen, when even the children would look for it, without fearing that another aimed in the same manner should fall in the same place. That we saw ourselves in the public square, where a multitude of citizens were assembled.

“The triumph of our arms has been complete, and we have only to lament the loss of a sergeant and two artillerymen, who fell gloriously in fighting for their country. The families of those victims ought to be taken care of by the supreme government, to whose paternal gratitude they have been recommended by the most excellent senior general-in-chief. We must also be consoled by the thought that the blood of these brave men has been revenged by their bereaved companions. As many



of our balls passed through the enemy's embrasures, the loss to the Americans must have been very great; and although we do not know exactly the number of their dead, the most accurate information makes it amount to fifty-six. It is probable that such is the case. Since eleven o'clock in the morning, the abandonment of their guns, merely because two of them were dismounted, and the others were uncovered; the panic-terror with which, in all haste, they took refuge in their furthest entrenchments, taking away from the camp all that could suffer from the attack of our artillery; the destruction which must have been occasioned by the bombs so well aimed, that some would burst at a yard's distance from the ground in their descent to the point where they were to fall; every thing contributes to persuade that indeed the enemy have suffered a terrible loss. If it were not the case—if they preserved some remnant of valour, why did they not dare to repair their fortifications in the night? It is true that, from time to time, a few guns were fired on them in the night, but their aim could not be certain, and cowardice alone could force them not to put themselves in an attitude to return the fire which was poured on them again at daylight. No American put out his head; silence reigned in their camp; and for this reason we have suspended our fire to-day—that there is no enemy to meet our batteries.

“To conclude, we will give a brilliant paragraph relating to the contest, by the most excellent senior general-in-chief, as to the part which he took in the events of yesterday. He says thus: ‘Mexico must glorify herself, and especially the valiant men of the Division of the North, that a force inferior in its elements, and perhaps in numbers also, and which required nearly two months to swell itself with the auxiliaries coming from the capital, should meet in an immense plain, defying the army of the United States, and the whole power of that republic, without their opponents, who could receive succour in the space of fifty hours, should dare to leave the fort to give us battle.’

“From the news which we publish to-day, it will be seen

that the Northern Division, so deservedly entrusted with the first operations against the North American army, has most nobly filled its highly important mission. Not that we mean to be understood as considering its task is yet fully completed, but we anticipate, before the end of the present week, to witness the total discomfiture of the enemy, who has had the temerity to answer the fire of our batteries; of those batteries that gave them yesterday such abundant proof of that valour, so characteristic of the Mexicans: a valour rendered famous in a hundred bloody contests! It were endless to recount all the acts of patriotism performed by the troops of the garrison, and the valiant citizens who shared in the defence of the city—they courted danger with that intrepidity always inspired by a just cause.

“So rapid is the fire of our guns, that *the batteries of the enemy have been silenced*. But what is most worthy of notice, as showing the great enthusiasm of this place, is the fact that many of the inhabitants, of both sexes, in the hottest of the cannonade, remained firm in front of the enemy, filled with enthusiasm; indeed, fear is always unknown to those whose mission is to avenge an outrage upon the sacred rights of their beloved country.

“From our account of the war, the world will judge of the great superiority of our troops, in courage as well as skill, over the Americans. It is indeed wonderful to witness the dismay of the enemy: rare is the occurrence when an American ventures outside of the breastwork. There can be no doubt of this, that the Mexicans will be considered by foreign nations as the very emblems of patriotism. How evident that they inherit the blood of the noble sons of Pelayo! Happy they who have met with so glorious a death in defending the territory bequeathed to them by their fathers!

“The nation with which we are at war is most savage in its proceedings; no regard being paid to the flags of friendly nations: even those usages and customs respected by civilized nations, to divest war of some of its horrors, have been shamefully disregarded. The enemy have fired red shot against this

innocent city, and we publish it to the world in proof that, with all their boasted wisdom and liberty, they are unworthy of being counted among enlightened nations.

“His excellency, the general-in-chief of the Northern Division, and his intrepid soldiers, are ready to fight the enemy in any numbers, and we are certain that our arms will be successful; but the nation against whom we have to contend is excessively proud; and it is also possessed of resources which may perhaps surpass those within our reach. Let us then make an immense effort to repel their aggressions. Let us contribute every thing most dear to us, our persons, our means, to save our country from its present danger. Let us oppose to the unbridled ambition of the Anglo-American that patriotic enthusiasm so peculiar to us. Indeed, we need only follow the glorious example of Matamoros, that noble city, which will be known in future by the name of Heroic. Its inhabitants have emulated the examples of Menamia and Saguntum; they have determined to die at the foot of the eagle of Anahuac, defend their fort whilst they retain the breath of life—this plan is settled. The supreme government is making strenuous exertions in order to protect the territory placed under its care by the nation, and nothing is now wanting but for the people to rush in a mass to the frontier, and the independence of Mexico is safe.”

On the morning of the 5th, a battery was discovered in the rear of Fort Brown, which a large body of the enemy, having crossed the river, had erected during the night. It opened a severe fire, and, at the same time, a tremendous discharge of shell and shot was maintained from the guns at Matamoros. Both were answered efficiently, their position being within range of the heavy guns of the fort. Major Brown had caused bomb-proof shelters to be erected for the men, to which they retreated when the shells were bursting within the entrenchments. The great extent of the works over which the men were scattered, and this precaution, rendered almost abortive the cannonading of the enemy, which was maintained for days with great spirit and precision. Among the first, and very few,



however, who were victims of the storm, was the excellent and gallant commander himself. In the midst of an incessant cross-fire from the Mexican batteries on both shores of the river, he was making his usual round of the works, and assuring himself that the men were at their posts, when he was struck by a shell, which tore off one of his legs, inflicting a mortal injury. He was borne to the hospital, suffering excruciating torture ; but, forgetful of himself, he still cheered the men in their duty. The shattered limb was amputated ; and, while under the operation, he expressed his gratification that his country had not lost a younger man. A veteran in the service he could die calmly as he had lived nobly, devoted to the latest moment to his country and the honour of her arms."

Meanwhile, the enemy grew bolder, under the impression that their guns were rapidly destroying the entire command in the fort. Large bodies of them surrounded it, and the erection of another battery was commenced on the site of General Taylor's camp. Captain Hawkins succeeded Major Brown, and this was judged by Arista to be a favourable moment for a summons to surrender. On the afternoon of the 6th, he accordingly sounded a parley ; and, under the protection of a white flag, sent the following note, the merits of which would suffer by description or abridgment :

" Mexican Army, Division of the North.

" GENERAL-IN-CHIEF :—

" You are besieged by forces sufficient to take you ; and there is, moreover, a numerous division encamped near you, which, free from all other cares, will keep off any succours which you may expect to receive.

" The respect for humanity, acknowledged at the present age by all civilized nations, doubtless imposes upon me the duty of mitigating the disasters of war.

" This principle, which Mexicans observe above all other nations, obliges me to summon you, as all your efforts will be useless, to surrender, in order to avoid, by a capitulation, the entire destruction of all the soldiers under your command.

“You will thus afford me the pleasure of complying with the mild and benevolent wishes above expressed, which distinguish the character of my countrymen, whilst I, at the same time, fulfil the most imperious of the duties which my country requires for the offences committed against it.

“MARIANO ARISTA.

“God and Liberty!

“Head Quarters at the Tonques Del Raminero, May 6, 1846.”

To this missive, more preposterous in sentiment than futile in purpose, Captain Hawkins replied, that he had duly considered its humane proposition, which, if he correctly understood, he respectfully declined. Resolved to make good his threat, Arista now redoubled the work of his batteries, and their balls were hailed, for successive hours, into the fort. The ammunition in the latter, although prudently used from the first, was so far reduced, that no reply was made to the guns of the Mexicans. Their troops, elated by this circumstance, were seen in great numbers on every side of the American works. Through the night the firing ceased, but the garrison watched constantly, expecting an assault. The next day, the 7th, the bombardment was vigorously maintained, two or three men being wounded and several horses killed, from time to time, by the explosion of the shells. Again at night a watch was kept in anticipation of an assault, which had been determined by the Mexican general, who, to justify his professions of personal and national valour, had a corps organized and inspected for the purpose. Under cover of the darkness, Captain Mansfield levelled the traverse thrown up by General Worth, and cut down the chapparal which screened the enemy's sharp shooters.

Continual watching and labour had begun to weary the Americans. They had become familiarized, during four days, to the roar of heavy ordnance, and to the falling of balls among them. Their orders were, not to fire unless the enemy approached within eighty yards of the fort, and this condition never occurring, they were obliged silently to watch the efforts to destroy them. It was a duty to test in the severest manner

their courage and fortitude ; yet not a man faltered, and many were the examples of heroic indifference to danger. Four days and nights the iron tempest raged on all sides with little intermission. Soon after its commencement the signal cannon, as directed by General Taylor, had been fired, to warn him of increasing peril to the friends whom he had left. At mid-day, on the 8th of May, there was a pause in the thunder of the Mexican guns. Two hours passed, and other guns were heard, sending their rapid echoes afar from the north-east. To the beleaguered Americans there was sympathy and succour in those deep and distant sounds. A shout of joy and hope went up from the fort.

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## CHAPTER VII.

General Taylor leaves Point Isabel for Fort Brown—His Force—The March—Enemy reported—Rest before battle—Palo Alto—Enemy in sight—Taylor's order of battle—Lieut. Blake's bold reconnoissance—Taylor's confidence—Arista's Force and order of battle—The Enemy's first Fire—The Answer and its Effect—Charge by the Lancers—Their repulse—Fall of Ringgold—The Prairie on fire—Charge on the Train—Duncan's Battery—May's gallantry—The last Charge—The Field won—The Loss—Taylor's first Despatch—His detailed account of the Action—Mention of Lieut. Blake—Of the Artillery—Of Lieut. Luther—Statement of Forces—Arista's Despatch—Misstatement of his Force—Explanations of Failure—False colouring—Acknowledgment of Loss—Remarks on the causes of the Victory.

GENERAL Taylor had tarried a week at Point Isabel, placing that post in a state of defence, and making the requisite preparations to conduct a large train of supplies to the camp, which he had temporarily left, opposite Matamoros. Booming across the wide prairie, which separated him from the gallant defenders of Fort Brown, he had heard the deep-mouthed cannon, which invited his return. But he never doubted that the trust he had left would be faithfully kept while an arm could be raised to maintain it. The sun of the 7th of May was declining, when, at the head of twenty-three hundred men, and with a supply



train of nearly three hundred wagons, he again turned his face towards the Rio Grande. Two eighteen-pound guns, mounted on siege-carriages and drawn by ten yoke of oxen, moved laboriously on, in contrast with the eight light pieces of Ringgold's and Duncan's Flying Artillery. Only two hundred sabres made the array of his cavalry, and eighteen hundred muskets told the complement of his infantry force. Twenty-seven miles separated him from the position which he had occupied upon its banks, and after a march of one-fourth the distance he bivouacked till the following morning. Through the silent watches, if the distant voice of the enemy's batteries told how they still menaced the destruction of the fort, it also cheered our troops on their way to its relief, assuring them by every echo, that their comrades were safe and

“Giving proof through the night that our flag still was there!”

As the day dawned again, the march was resumed, and continued without interruption till nearly noon. At this hour fatigue might have suggested repose, but just then the scouts reported the Mexicans drawn up at the farther verge of a prairie, prepared to oppose the progress of the American army. The news gave fresh vigour to the troops, anxious to prove to an enemy, who had accused them of a cowardly retreat, how far the reproach was merited. The columns continued to advance, and a plain three miles wide extended before them. General Taylor awaited the coming of the main body and then ordered a halt. To prepare for the expected conflict, he gave the men an hour to rest, while, from the pools of fresh water near them, they quenched their present thirst, and filled their canteens, which were afterwards drained by many a wounded and weary foe. The train, remaining in the rear, was formed into a solid square.

At two o'clock the order passed along the columns to advance. The limbs, pained by leagues of travel, forgot their toil, and moved on as if just risen from the long repose of a home-spent night. And the backs, which had bent from sunrise to meridian beneath a soldier's arms and burden, were

straightened up as if conscious only of the pride of a holiday suit. The field widened before the moving troops; and its further boundary was a dwarfish wood, rising but little above the feeble vegetation of that barren waste. But seeming high by contrast, it is so called, and gives to the spot the name of *Palo Alto*. As the columns pressed forward, another bristling forest was indistinctly seen in front of that stunted wood. It was the long line of Arista's army, posted in hostile array to forbid the progress of Taylor's meagre battalions. The distance was too great to distinguish the different corps, but as the sun shone upon them, the fitful glitter of each extreme told where the pride of Mexico was stationed—her squadrons of brilliant lancers.

To be prepared for the enemy, Taylor thus disposed his force. Beginning with the right wing, commanded by Colonel Twiggs, were the Fifth Infantry, under Colonel M'Intosh; Ringgold's Artillery; the Third Infantry, under Capt. Morris; two eighteen-pounders, under Lieutenant Churchill; Fourth Infantry, under Major Allen; two squadrons of Dragoons, under Captains Ker and May. The left wing, commanded by Colonel Belknap, was formed of a battalion of Artillery, under Colonel Childs; Duncan's Light Artillery; and the Eighth Infantry, under Captain Montgomery. The army advancing in this order, Lieutenant Blake, of the Topographical Engineers, suddenly dashed forward, and, leaving it in the rear, did not pause until his horse brought him within a hundred and fifty yards of the enemy's lines. There dismounting, he calmly drew forth his spy-glass, and reconnoitred them. So daring an act deceived them as to its object, and two of their officers rode forth towards him. Seeing this, he remounted, and rode leisurely along the whole extent of their front, carefully noting the force and position of the several arms. Having performed this singular and hazardous exploit,—the admiration of both opposing armies,—he rode back to his commander, and reported accurately the numbers and dispositions of the enemy. Six thousand men, many of them the veterans of other fields, stood there to resist the progress of two thousand, who

were to witness for the first time the clash of hostile arms. But when the signal odds were known to the American chief, he paused not, blenched not. Firm in his resolution, conscious of his resources, confident of his followers, the great array of the foe served but to nerve his will, and exalt his hope. The flags of his troops were the same stripes and stars which had waved in triumph where he had fought before ; and, as he glanced along the ranks, over which they were borne, he felt that his progress was still to victory.

The Mexican general had chosen a vast and open field to give the Americans battle. His right wing rested upon a gentle eminence covered with the low timber and under-growth of the sea-coast prairie ; and his left extended to an impassable salt-marsh. A thousand horse, at each extreme, menaced, in due time, the American flanks with an overwhelming charge. Twelve pieces of cannon, supported by four thousand infantry, were placed at intervals to command their entire front. Thus the opposing multitudes approached, until the arms and banners of each were fully discerned by the other. Over the Mexican host arose the gorgeous standards which marked their various corps,—and, among them, most honourable, that of the old and valiant Battalion of Tampico.—Above all, gleamed the tall steel, and quivered the gay pennons, of the renowned Lancers. It was a mild day in mid-spring, not a cloud to curtain the sun, still far above the horizon ; and then

“———it was a glorious sight to see,  
For one who had no friend, no brother there,  
Their rival scarfs, of mixed embroidery,  
And various arms that glittered in the air.”

Silently, the little army of the Americans kept on their way. The thick, rank grass forbade an echo of their steady tramp ; and the only sound, while “ the bravest held his breath for a time,” was the rattle of the artillery-harness, and the ring of the troopers’ scabbards.

“ Firm paced and slow, a fearless front they form,  
Still as the breeze, but dreadful as the storm.”

Only seven hundred yards now separated the two armies,



when from the Mexican right the artillery, with ball and grape, thundered a challenge to the conflict. Promptly was it accepted. Taylor halted his columns, and gave the order to deploy into line, which was obeyed with the steadiness and precision of their ordinary drill. The light batteries on the flanks, and in the centre the eighteen-pounders, were advanced about a hundred yards, the General in person directing the position of the latter. Before this movement, he had ridden along each brigade, and encouraged the men to be cool and deliberate. For some minutes there was silence through the line, when the order passed to answer the enemy's fire. The prompt roar of Duncan's guns on the left, echoed by Ringgold's on the right, fulfilled the command, carrying fearful messengers across the plain. On both sides, the deep tones of the ordnance alone was heard. Before Ringgold's rapid discharges, the fine cavalry on the Mexican left faltered, and fell back to escape their resistless effect. From the centre, Churchill then directed the more terrible eighteen-pounders, while Duncan, pressing nearer to the enemy's right, made it share the ruin of the other extreme. The cannon on both sides, the only arm employed, continued thus for nearly an hour to maintain the fight. The Fifth Regiment of Infantry was then detached, and advanced to the right and front, nearly half a mile, with orders to turn the left flank of the Mexicans, who had gradually receded before the artillery, which, at every discharge, opened hideous breaches in the living wall of their lines.

Arista witnessed with painful surprise the frequent service and the deadly precision of the American guns, while his own, less rapid, often failed in their aim. Bravery and firmness were not wanting in his ranks, but he soon perceived that in a contest of artillery only, his force must speedily melt away before the inevitable fire directed against it. He therefore ordered a charge by the cavalry on his left, commanded by General Torrejon, while he led that on the right, with his infantry, against that portion of the American line respectively opposed to them. Torrejon came; and not less than a thousand horse, supported by two field-pieces, dashed with him upon our right. The

Fifth and Third Regiments were ordered to receive him ; and as the splendid red lancers bore rapidly up, discharging their escopettes, the Fifth, thrown into cavalry square, returned the salute from one of its sides with a volley, which carried confusion into their foremost ranks. But recovering from the check, they still pressed gallantly towards our rear. The Third Infantry, promptly detached to the extreme right, covering the train, prepared to repel them ; while Lieutenant Ridgely, with a section of Ringgold's battery, rushed to the left of the Fifth, and wheeling his flying pieces into position, before Torrejon's tardy guns were unlimbered, poured a ruinous fire into their columns, which they vainly struggled to resist. Precipitately they turned and fled, their retreating squadrons lessened at every step by the iron storm which pursued them.

While this encounter proceeded on one wing, Ringgold, to the right of the eighteen-pounders, occupying the road, continued with them to sweep the enemy's left. Thus engaged, a ball from one of their guns struck that daring officer and his horse, and, fatally mangled, both were dashed to the ground. Friends sprang to his aid, but forgetful of self, he bade them do their duty in the battle, and leave him to his fate. He was borne from the field, and Lieutenant Shover succeeded him in command, worthily sustaining the action till its close.

Meanwhile Duncan advanced on the left, and supported by the Eighth Infantry, efficiently maintained the conflict of that extreme for two hours, the whole wing exposed during that time to a galling fire from the opposing artillery. The long grass of the prairie, parched by the constant blaze of the guns on either side, was suddenly lighted into flame by a discharge from one of Duncan's pieces. The smoke, rolling in heavy masses, concealed each army from the other, and for a time the battle paused. As the sea-breeze blew parallel to their fronts, it for a moment cleared the smoke on our left, and disclosed to the enemy that wing with its field-pieces, advancing to the right of its first position. The occasion was not lost to the quick eye of Duncan, who perceived the whole cavalry and infantry force of the Mexican right, two thousand men, moving



DEATH OF RINGGOLD.





upon our train. Again the smoke of the burning prairie screened from each the adverse lines. But Duncan, under orders of Col. Belknap, wheeled his horses, and rushing in the direction of the enemy's lancers, halted within musket range, and as the air suddenly cleared again, he was in a position to receive them. So rapid was the movement, that they who, but an instant before, had seen the battery flying in another direction, halted in astonishment. One section of it poured a volley of shot and shells in their ranks, while another was directed against the regiments of foot, just then appearing from the chapparal, supported by two other squadrons of horse. The latter bodies, infantry and cavalry, retired to the chapparal, while the former stood firm before a fire which cut deep gaps in their solid masses. Again their fellows, having re-formed, debouched from the wood, and advanced steadily and valiantly in the teeth of the engines whose deadly aim had just driven them back. But the storm was resistless, and the infantry broke in confusion. Their supporting cavalry bore up but a moment longer, and then turned also. The whole body now fled, and in their retreating corps, the flying artillery kept up the havoc which it had begun.

Before and during these movements on the left of our line, a change in the relative position of both armies had been effected. The enemy, pressed by our right, had formed his front nearly at right angles to its original line. Evening was approaching, when Captain May was ordered by General Taylor to drive the enemy's cavalry on his left flank. In the movement to execute this order, which he was eager to attempt in the face of fearful odds, he passed the General and his staff, and at the same moment received a direct volley from the enemy's batteries, which, wounding five men and killing six horses, deprived him at one blow of a twentieth of his troop. He gained, however, a position on the right, and there perceiving the impossibility of charging successfully a force ten times his own, returned to his first position.

The action on our right, interrupted for an hour by the burning grass, was renewed, the enemy constantly, though

steadily, falling back. A demonstration by his cavalry was made on the eighteen-pounders, at a moment when they were supported only by Ker's dragoons and the artillery battalion. But the latter, forming into square, repelled the charge, which was the last desperate effort to capture the pieces, that bore destruction to all before them. The shades of night only arrested the fatal work which the day permitted. The Mexican army, diminished by hundreds of wounded and dead, retreated behind the chapparal, while the Americans bivouacked upon the field so hardly and valiantly won.

The field had been won, but the enemy was not conquered. Night, as it closed the bloody labours of the day, brought time for thought upon the morrow. It brought, too, rumours of numerous and fresh troops, reinforcing the Mexican army, which, it was apprehended, would recede to a new and better position, resolved still to oppose the advance of the small and jaded body of the Americans. Notwithstanding the success of the first encounter, it was therefore thought expedient to hold a consultation of officers on the policy of proceeding against a foe, far superior in numbers, and proved to possess both courage and endurance. The result of the council was a unanimous decision to move forward on the following morning. That this had been Taylor's constant determination need hardly be added. He feared not defeat before a blow had been struck. Now he regarded a future triumph as the certain sequel of a conflict.

While the mass of the wearied troops slept beside their arms, with only the earth for their bed and the sky for its canopy, parties of them were following up the toil of the day by seeking the wounded left upon the field, and ministering to their comfort. Scores of their unfortunate adversaries shared these humane offices. Their loss in killed and wounded, as afterwards reported, was six hundred. The loss on our side was nine killed and forty-four wounded. Among the latter was Captain Page, an officer of great merit, who soon afterwards died. The fate of the gallant Ringgold has already been mentioned. If others were more fortunate, they were equally exposed to



danger. General Taylor himself was often where the fire of the enemy was hottest, and set the example to his men of braving the death which constantly menaced their ranks. Of this glorious action of Palo Alto, the following is the brief and unpretending account which he prepared before the morning of the 9th :

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camp at Palo Alto, Texas, May 9, 1846.

SIR : I have the honour to report that I was met near this place yesterday, on my march from Point Isabel, by the Mexican forces, and after an action of about five hours, dislodged them from their position and encamped upon the field. Our artillery, consisting of two eighteen-pounders and two light batteries, was the arm chiefly engaged, and to the excellent manner in which it was manœuvred and served is our success mainly due.

The strength of the enemy is believed to have been about 6000 men, with seven pieces of artillery, and 800 cavalry. His loss is probably at least one hundred killed. Our strength did not exceed, all told, twenty-three hundred, while our loss was comparatively trifling—four men killed, three officers and thirty-seven men wounded, several of the latter mortally. I regret to say that Major Ringgold, 2d artillery, and Captain Page, 4th infantry, are severely wounded. Lieutenant Luther, 2d artillery, slightly so.

The enemy has fallen back, and it is believed has re-passed the river. I have advanced parties now thrown forward in his direction, and shall move the main body immediately.

In the haste of this report, I can only say that the officers and men behaved in the most admirable manner throughout the action. I shall have the pleasure of making a more detailed report when those of the different commanders shall be received.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

A few days afterwards, the annexed despatch was prepared. Its details are essential as a matter of justice to the officers and men, who merited all the encomiums of their worthy commander. The document is dated, Head Quarters, Camp near Matamoras, May 16, 1846, and, after an introductory sentence, proceeds as follows :

“ The main body of the Army of Occupation marched under my immediate orders from Point Isabel on the evening of the 7th of May, and bivouacked seven miles from that place.

“ Our march was resumed the following morning. About noon, when our advance of cavalry had reached the water-hole of ‘ Palo Alto,’ the Mexican troops were reported in our front, and were soon discovered occupying the road in force. I ordered a halt upon reaching the water, with a view to rest and refresh the men, and to form deliberately our line of battle. The Mexican line was now plainly visible across the prairie, and about three-quarters of a mile distant. Their left, which was composed of a heavy force of cavalry, occupied the road, resting upon a thicket of chapparal, while masses of infantry were discovered in succession on the right, greatly outnumbering our own force.

“ Our line of battle was now formed in the following order, commencing on the extreme right :—5th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel M’Intosh ; Major Ringgold’s Artillery ; 3d Infantry, commanded by Captain L. N. Morris ; two eighteen-pounders, commanded by Lieutenant Churchill ; 3d Artillery ; 4th Infantry, commanded by Major G. W. Allen ; the 3d and 4th regiments composed the Third Brigade, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Garland ; and all the above corps, together with two squadrons of Dragoons, under Captains Ker and May, composed the right wing, under the orders of Colonel Twiggs. The left was formed by the Battalion of Artillery, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Childs, Captain Duncan’s Light Artillery, and the Eighth Infantry, under Captain Montgomery—all forming the First Brigade, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Belknap. The train was parked near the

water, under direction of Captains Crossman and Myers, and protected by Captain Ker's squadron.

“About 2 o'clock, we took up the march, by heads of columns, in the direction of the enemy—the eighteen-pounder battery following the road. While the columns were advancing, Lieutenant Blake, topographical engineer, volunteered a reconnaissance of the enemy's line, which was handsomely performed, and resulted in the discovery of at least two batteries of artillery in the intervals of their cavalry and infantry. These batteries were soon opened upon us, when I ordered the columns halted and deployed into line, and the fire to be returned by all our artillery. The Eighth Infantry, on our extreme left, was thrown back to secure that flank. The first fires of the enemy did little execution, while our eighteen-pounders and Major Ringgold's Artillery soon dispersed the cavalry which formed his left. Captain Duncan's battery, thrown forward in advance of the line, was doing good execution at this time. Captain May's squadron was now detached to support that battery, and the left of our position. The Mexican cavalry, with two pieces of artillery, were now reported to be moving through the chapparal to our right to threaten that flank, or make a demonstration against the train. The Fifth Infantry was immediately detached to check this movement, and, supported by Lieutenant Ridgely, with a section of Major Ringgold's battery, and Captain Walker's company of volunteers, effectually repulsed the enemy—the Fifth Infantry repelling a charge of lancers, and the artillery doing great execution in their ranks. The Third Infantry was now detached to the right as a still further security to that flank, yet threatened by the enemy. Major Ringgold, with the remaining section, kept up his fire from an advanced position, and was supported by the Fourth Infantry.

“The grass of the prairie had been accidentally fired by our artillery, and the volumes of smoke now partially concealed the armies from each other. As the enemy's left had evidently been driven back, and left the road free, the cannonade having been suspended, I ordered forward the eighteen-pounders on the



road nearly to the position first occupied by the Mexican cavalry, and caused the First brigade to take up a new position still on the left of the eighteen-pounder battery. The Fifth was advanced from its former position and occupied a point on the extreme right of the new line. The enemy made a change of position corresponding to our own, and after a suspension of nearly an hour the action was resumed.

“The fire of artillery was now most destructive—openings were constantly made through the enemy’s ranks by our fire, and the constancy with which the Mexican infantry sustained this severe cannonade was a theme of universal remark and admiration. Captain May’s squadron was detached to make a demonstration on the left of the enemy’s position, and suffered severely from the fire of artillery to which it was for some time exposed.

“The Fourth Infantry, which had been ordered to support the eighteen-pounder battery, was exposed to a most galling fire of artillery, by which several men were killed, and Captain Page dangerously wounded. The enemy’s fire was directed against our eighteen-pounder battery, and the guns under Major Ringgold in its vicinity. The Major himself, while coolly directing the fire of his pieces, was struck by a cannon ball and mortally wounded.

“In the mean time, the Battalion of Artillery, under Lieutenant Colonel Childs, had been brought up to support the artillery on our right. A strong demonstration of cavalry was now made by the enemy against this part of our line, and the column continued to advance under a severe fire from the eighteen-pounders. The battalion was instantly formed in square, and held ready to receive the charge of cavalry, but when the advancing squadrons were within close range, a deadly fire of canister from the eighteen-pounders dispersed them. A brisk fire of small-arms was now opened upon the square, by which one officer, Lieutenant Luther, 2d artillery, was slightly wounded, but a well directed volley from the front of the square silenced all further firing from the enemy in this quarter. It was now nearly dark, and the action was closed

on the right of our line, the enemy having been completely driven back from his position, and foiled in every attempt against our line.

“While the above was going forward on our right, and under my own eye, the enemy had made a serious attempt against the left of our line. Captain Duncan instantly perceived the movement, and by the bold and brilliant manœuvring of his battery, completely repulsed several successive efforts of the enemy to advance in force upon our left flank. Supported in succession by the 8th Infantry and Captain Ker’s squadron of Dragoons, he gallantly held the enemy at bay, and finally drove him, with immense loss, from the field. The action here and along the whole line, continued until dark, when the enemy retired into the chapparal in rear of his position. Our army bivouacked on the ground it occupied. During the afternoon the train had been moved forward about half a mile, and was parked in rear of the new position.

“Our loss this day was nine killed, forty-four wounded, and two missing. Among the wounded were Major Ringgold, who has since died, and Captain Page dangerously wounded. Lieutenant Luther slightly so.

“Our own force is shown by the field report to have been 177 officers and 2111 men—aggregate 2288. The Mexican force, according to the statements of their own officers, was not less than 6000 regular troops, with ten pieces of artillery, and probably exceeded that number; the irregular force not known. Their loss was not less than 200 killed and 400 wounded; probably greater. This estimate is very moderate, and formed upon the number actually counted upon the field and upon the reports of their own officers.

“As already reported in my first brief despatch, the conduct of our officers and men was every thing that could be desired. Exposed for hours to the severest trial, cannonade of artillery, our troops displayed a coolness and constancy, which gave me throughout the assurance of victory.”

With this unvarnished tale it is interesting to compare

the ingenious account given by General Arista of the same occurrences. If it appears uncandid in any particular, or in its spirit, the embarrassing position of the writer must be his apology. It is addressed to the Mexican Minister of War and Marine.

“Constant in my purpose of preventing General Taylor from uniting the forces which he brought from the Fronton of Sante Isabel, with those which he left opposite Matamoros, I moved this day from the Fanques del Raminero, whence I despatched my last extraordinary courier, and took the direction of Palo Alto, as soon as my spies informed me that the enemy had left Fronton, with the determination of introducing into his fort wagons loaded with provisions and heavy artillery.

“I arrived opposite Palo Alto about one o'clock, and observed that the enemy was entering that position.

“With all my forces, I established the line of battle in a great plain, my right resting upon an elevation, and my left on a slough of difficult passage.

“Scarcely was the first cannon fired, when there arrived General D. Pedro de Ampudia, second in command, whom I had ordered to join me after having covered the points which might serve to besiege the enemy in the forts opposite Matamoros.

“The forces under my orders amounted to three thousand men, and twelve pieces of artillery; those of the invaders were three thousand, rather less than more, and were superior in artillery, since they had twenty pieces of the calibre of sixteen and eighteen pounds.

“The battle commenced so ardently, that the fire of cannon did not cease a single moment. In the course of it, the enemy wished to follow the road to Matamoros, to raise the siege of his troops; with which object he fired the grass, and formed in front of his line of battle a smoke so thick, that he succeeded in covering himself from our view, but by means of manœuvres this was twice embarrassed.

“General Taylor maintained his attack rather defensively than offensively, employing his best arm, which is artillery,



protected by half of the infantry, and all of his cavalry, keeping the remainder fortified in the ravine, about two thousand yards from the field of battle.

"I was anxious for the charge, because the fire of cannon did much damage in our ranks, and I instructed General D. Anastasio Torrejon to execute it with the greater part of the cavalry, by our left flank, with some columns of infantry, and the remainder of the cavalry.

"I was waiting the moment when that general should execute the charge, and the effect of it should begin to be seen, in order to give the impulse on the right; but he was checked by a fire of the enemy, which defended a slough that embarrassed the attack.

"Some battalions, becoming impatient by the loss which they suffered, fell into disorder, demanding to advance or fall back. I immediately caused them to charge with a column of cavalry, under the command of Colonel D. Cayetano Montero; the result of this operation being that the dispersed corps repaired their fault as far as possible, marching towards the enemy, who, in consequence of his distance, was enabled to fall back upon his reserve, and night coming on, the battle was concluded, the field remaining for our arms.

"Every suitable measure was then adopted, and the division took up a more concentrated curve in the same scene of action.

"The combat was long and bloody, which may be estimated from the calculations made by the commandant general of artillery, General D. Thomas Requena, who assures me that the enemy threw about three thousand cannon-shots from two in the afternoon, when the battle commenced, until seven at night, when it terminated,—six hundred and fifty being fired on our side.

"The national arms shone forth, since they did not yield a hand's breadth of ground, notwithstanding the superiority in artillery of the enemy, who suffered much damage.

"Our troops have to lament the loss of two hundred and fifty-two men dispersed, wounded, and killed,—the last worthy

of national recollection and gratitude for the intrepidity with which they died fighting for the most sacred of causes.

“Will your excellency please with his note to report to his excellency the President, representing to him that I will take care to give a circumstantial account of this deed of arms; and recommending to him the good conduct of all the generals, chiefs, officers, and soldiers under my orders, for sustaining so bloody a combat, which does honour to our arms, and exhibits their discipline.”

This document is dated, “*In sight of the Enemy, May 8th.*”

Throughout this action, memorable alike as the first in which the armies of the United States and Mexico were in open field, and as the beginning of a series of extraordinary victories, the enemy had every apparent advantage to secure the day. He had selected his own ground, the ground to which his cavalry was accustomed, and on which there was no natural impediment to their movements; and that body alone equalled the whole force of every arm which he determined to resist. There was, too, active daring, and passive courage in his ranks. His common soldiers had redeemed even the pledges of his boasting generals. What then was the cause of his failure? One, certainly, is found in the inferiority of his artillery, which in no respect was served as our own. But this one cause will not explain a reverse so disastrous. The chief reason for it must be sought in the comparative abilities of the two commanders, and the spirit of their subordinates. Before the battle, Arista must have been ignorant of the power of our light artillery; but when he had witnessed it, and discovered that his only hope of success was in a close conflict and the capture of the pieces, he should have charged up to our lines at any partial sacrifice. It is true that he thrice attempted this at different points, and with his overwhelming numbers, why should he have failed? The want of impetuous, self-abandoning, indomitable bravery in his officers affords the only explanation. Their men sustained the destructive volleys of our guns with noble firmness, and had they been led on by superiors worthy

of them, they might have more nearly balanced the fortunes of the day, even if they had failed to overpower their adversaries, who entered the field reckless of any opposing force, and resolved to maintain it at any cost.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Mexican Army retreating—Taylor's March resumed—Mexican Dead and Wounded—Skirmishes with the Enemy—Mexican Army formed—Its Position—La Resaca de la Palma—The Battle commenced—The Artillery—Infantry engaged—Close Quarters—The Enemy's Batteries—May ordered to charge them—Ridgely's Gallantry—May's furious Onset—Inge's and Sackett's Death—Batteries captured—La Vega a Prisoner—The Fifth Infantry's charge—Personal deeds—The Enemy's bravery—Officers Wounded and Killed—Arista's Camp taken—The Tampico Battalion—Rout of the Enemy—The Booty—The Loss—Taylor's first Despatch—His detailed Account—Encomiums on his Troops—Mistakes of Arista—Misery of routed Troops—Gen. Taylor's care of the Wounded—His return to Point Isabel—Congratulates his Troops—Mexican Commander's Manifesto—Remarks on causes of his Defeat—Inferiority of Officers—Authority cited—Self-devotion of American Officers—Examples—Anecdotes of Heroism—Ridgely—Page—Payne—Ringgold—Richey—Woods and Hays—Augur and Cochrane—Barbour—May—Melton—Lincoln and Jordan—Belknap and Scott—McIntosh—Letter of a Witness.

THE sun of the ninth of May was raising the curtain of mist, which hung across the field of Palo Alto, when the rear guard of the Mexican army was descried, gradually retiring through the distant chapparal. Although defeated in the contest of the previous day, its numbers were still formidable, and the rumours of the night increased them by large bodies of fresh troops. Anticipating another struggle before he should reach the Rio Grande, General Taylor made the requisite preparations for it. To place the train beyond the reach of accident, it was left in its position strongly parked, and entrenched, with four pieces of artillery and the artillery battalion to defend it. The wounded, by such modes of carriage as circumstances permitted, were sent back to Point Isabel; and then, with a force diminished by the train guard, and by the losses of the late battle, the resolute commander gave the order for the advance.



As the ground, which had been occupied by the Mexicans was crossed, the dreadful tokens of the havoc made among them by the American artillery were exhibited on every side. Not only were the rigid and insensible bodies of the dead there, but the still writhing and conscious forms of the living, variously mutilated and mangled; who, forsaken by their friends, had passed the night on the chill earth, damp with their own blood, with no kind hand to stanch its flow, to bind up their wounds, or to wet their parched lips with a drop of water. As the columns, which, fulfilling the day before the soldier's mission, had caused their sufferings, marched by them to another field of strife and anguish, the pained and panting wretches, some by words and some by looks alone, would piteously ask for drink or food, or succour in their helplessness. What their enemies could give was freely given for the moment, and these then passed on, soon to forget the sad chances of one battle in the rage of another.

The march was continued until the edge of the chapparal was reached, which belted by a single narrow prairie extends about six miles to the bottom lands of the river. General Taylor had thrown forward a part of the first brigade under Capt. C. F. Smith, the second artillery and a few light companies, the whole commanded by Capt. McCall, to ascertain the enemy's force and position. It was three o'clock in the afternoon, when report was brought him that they had made a stand in the road, which was defended by artillery. An hour later, the main body under Taylor, overtook Capt. McCall, who reported that the Mexicans were formed in force in front. His command had skirmished with them and ascertained their position. Advancing into the chapparal, he had encountered small parties, which were fired upon; and then proceeding he had reached the strip of open land, which interrupts the broad reach of undergrowth. Through this clear space a ravine extends, which the road crosses. In the ravine and against the chapparal beyond it, the Mexicans were posted. They had chosen *La Resaca de la Palma* to make their second stand against American arms. Their position was well selected for

defence. The ravine is about four feet deep and from one to two hundred feet wide. Its bed in rainy seasons forms a series of pools, which are sometimes swollen so as to unite in one continuous line of water. With dry weather this subsides, hence the name "*Resaca de la Palma*." The Mexicans stood entrenched in this natural ditch, and against the dense thicket extending on its farther bank. As the right of Capt. McCall's detachment debouched from the wood facing them, a masked battery opened upon it, killing one man and wounding two others. Meanwhile, Lieut. Dobbins on the left, commanding a small party, was charged by a body of Mexicans, who suddenly emerged from the ravine. The foremost was shot by the brave lieutenant himself, and his men, following the example of his fire, caused the rest to retreat. Immediately the battery opened upon him and he fell wounded, but recovering his feet, he withdrew his party into the chapparal. At this moment a troop of cavalry rode by, and Lieut. Dobbins ordering a fire upon them they also rapidly retreated.

When General Taylor came up, he at once ordered Ridgely's battery to advance upon the road, supported by the Third, Fourth and Fifth Infantry, and McCall's command on either side of it. The latter immediately engaged the enemy, and was seconded by the light artillery, which speedily brought on a general action. As on the previous day, the execution of the artillery was terrible. But the enemy answered it with spirit and effect, having eight pieces posted on the road. During the necessary pauses in the discharges of the latter, Ridgely contrived to push forward his own, until they were only one hundred yards from those of the enemy, and at this murderous proximity, the firing was maintained with grape and cannister. Admirably did Ridgely and his men labour in this terrible service, the sinewy arms and broad chests of the latter bared as for some peaceful toil, while his unerring eye gave assurance that not a charge was sped in vain.

The infantry, at the same time, was pressing forward, and the sharp rattle of musketry on both sides accompanied the deep din of the ordnance. As each volley told upon the

ranks of the enemy, the wild shouts of our eager troops rivalled the clamour of their arms. Their force was extended and divided by the compact thickets which impeded their advance. The Third Regiment, under Captain Morris, and the Fourth, under Major Allen, still gaining ground, formed in the ravine. Here the fight was often hand to hand, and Mexico's bravest veterans resisted with every arm the impetuous onset of the Americans; but, except her artillery, no force could arrest them. That continued in position, and was used with severe efficiency. One piece on the right had been captured; but no successful effort had been made towards those in the centre, which covered the Mexican infantry in several desperate attempts to retake the captured gun.

General Taylor had for some time noted the strength of the enemy's position on the road, and the constant execution of his batteries upon our exposed lines. He called Captain May, who, with his Dragoons, had awaited orders in the rear, and told him to charge the artillery of the enemy, and take it, "*volens volens*." "I will do it!" said May; and, turning to his troop, he rose in his stirrups, pointed to the guns before him, and exclaiming, "Remember your regiment!—Men, follow!" he struck his charger, and bounded on before them down the narrow road. A deafening cheer answered his call, and they dashed on towards the cannons' mouths. For a moment, their career was checked by Ridgely's battery in the road. "Stop," said he, to the headlong leader, "till I draw their fire"—and with the word, his guns poured their iron torrent on the opposing batteries. It was met by a discharge from theirs, at the same moment, and while the smoke still rolled around them, May darted forward again to the charge. The noble horse which bore him outstripped his troop; and, as he neared the enemy's breastworks, he turned to wave them on when only the impetuous Inge was by to answer. But the squadron, fast as their straining steeds could fly, was hastening on, their upraised sabres flashing in the sun, when a volley from the higher battery swept fearfully upon their column. Seven men and eighteen horses were crushed beneath it.



MAY'S DRAGOONS CHARGING THE ENEMY'S BATTERIES.





Among them, Inge and Sackett perished. But the rest paused not. At a bound, May cleared the battery. The horses of a few others were equal to the leap, and their impetus carried them beyond the guns. Wheeling again, they drove the gunners off, and Captain Graham, and Lieutenants Pleasanton and Winship, with others, coming up, were masters of the battery. But they were surrounded by enemies determined not to yield their weapons without a struggle. The guns were recovered; and the little band of dragoons again dispersed those who manned them. One officer alone remained, who endeavoured to rally his men, and, with match in hand, was about to discharge a piece, when May dashed up, and summoned him to yield. "General La Vega is a prisoner," answered the brave Mexican, and gave up his sword. Exposed to a shower of musketry, he was conducted by Lieutenant Stevens to the rear of our lines.

The batteries, though silenced, could not be held by the few dragoons who had taken them. The Eighth Infantry, meanwhile, had been fiercely engaged on the right of the road, and a part of the Fifth on the left. These were now ordered to charge the batteries, and in turn, though resisted inch by inch, they took them, and finally drove the enemy at the bayonet's point from them and from his position on the left. In this assault many fell, and the daring Captain Hooe, leading on his company, had his arm shattered by a grape, which struck him to the ground. Col. Belknap, Lieut. Col. Payne, Captain Montgomery, and Captain Scott, cheered on the men of the Eighth in this gallant charge. Lieut. Col. McIntosh, the veteran hero of other fields, led the Fifth. After the loss of their artillery, the Mexicans still fought desperately, and all along the ravine the contest was sustained by them with stubborn bravery. Captain Morris, with Lieutenants Woods and Hays, followed by a score of men, charged through a pond and captured a field-piece, which was sweeping down the ranks of the Fourth. The chapparal presented even greater obstacles to the onward course of our troops than the storm of the enemy's cannon. From these natural walls the musketry of the Mexi-



cans poured a deadly fire. In a charge upon them McIntosh fell, pierced in the throat with a bayonet, and while thus pinned to the ground, his sword cleft his antagonist. Others rushed upon him, and thrust their bayonets through his limbs. Lieut. Jordan, too, was wounded in one of the reckless assaults made through the chapparal; and Lieut. Cochrane fell resisting a charge of cavalry, pierced with seven lance-wounds.

While these close encounters with the enemy were in progress, the artillery had ceased. Duncan's battery had been unemployed, as from its position it would have raked our lines; and Ridgely's, too, was silent, as friends and foes were clutched in desperate disorder along the thickets, and in the open spaces, to which the latter were driven. Worthily they strove to recover their lost position. The camp and head-quarters of Arista had been taken, and the rout of the Mexicans became general. A solitary banner still defied the onset of the victors. It was that of the Tampico Battalion, which had never yielded on any other field. Against fate and hope they fought on, until all were cut down. The standard-bearer, resolved to save his honoured charge, tore it from the staff and fled. But ridden down by our pursuing dragoons, he was made prisoner, and it was seized, the noblest trophy of the field. During the struggle of the enemy to beat back our resistless muskets, the artillery had advanced, and when, at every point, the Mexicans sought safety in flight, the batteries opened upon them with terrible effect. The artillery battalion, which, during the battle, had been left in the rear to guard the train, was now ordered to the pursuit. Ker's dragoons and Duncan's battery also followed the fleeing thousands, completing the work of their defeat, and making many prisoners.

In this daring and successful engagement General Taylor had only seventeen hundred men. The enemy, reinforced on the night of the 8th, opposed him with not less than seven thousand chosen troops, accustomed to war, and perfectly prepared for action, with a splendid body of cavalry and eight pieces of artillery. So total was the rout that all their camp contained was captured. The plate and private property, correspondence

of their general-in-chief, the arms, ammunition, standards, provisions, pack-saddles, and every equipment of seven thousand men and two thousand horses, save what they wore in their precipitous flight, fell into the hands of the victors. The triumph, however, was not bought without the price of every battle-field. In our ranks one hundred and ten were killed and wounded, and ten times that number in those of the enemy.

On the same day the subjoined brief despatch was prepared by General Taylor.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation  
Camp at Resaca de la Palma, 3 miles from Matamoros,  
10 o'clock P. M., May 9, 1846.

SIR : I have the honour to report that I marched with the main body of the army at two o'clock to-day, having previously thrown forward a body of light infantry into the forest which covers the Matamoros road. When near the spot where I am now encamped, my advance discovered that a ravine crossing the road had been occupied by the enemy with artillery. I immediately ordered a battery of field artillery to sweep the position, flanking and sustaining it by the 3d, 4th, and 5th regiments, deployed as skirmishers to the right and left. A heavy fire of artillery and of musketry was kept up for some time, until finally the enemy's batteries were carried in succession by a squadron of dragoons and the regiments of infantry that were on the ground. He was soon driven from his position, and pursued by a squadron of dragoons, battalion of artillery, 3d infantry, and a light battery, to the river. Our victory has been complete. Eight pieces of artillery, with a great quantity of ammunition, three standards, and some one hundred prisoners have been taken ; among the latter, General La Vega, and several other officers. One general is understood to have been killed. The enemy has recrossed the river, and I am sure will not again molest us on this bank.

The loss of the enemy in killed has been most severe. Our own has been very heavy, and I deeply regret to report that Lieutenant Inge, 2d dragoons, Lieutenant Cochrane, 4th in-

fantry, and Lieutenant Chadbourne, 8th infantry, were killed on the field. Lieutenant Colonel Payne, 4th artillery, Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh, Lieutenant Dobbins, 3d infantry; Captain Hooe and Lieutenant Fowler, 5th infantry; and Captain Montgomery, Lieutenants Gates, Selden, McClay, Burbank, and Jordan, 8th infantry, were wounded. The extent of our loss in killed and wounded is not yet ascertained, and is reserved for a more detailed report.

The affair of to-day may be regarded as a proper supplement to the cannonade of yesterday; and the two taken together, exhibit the coolness and gallantry of our officers and men in the most favourable light. All have done their duty, and done it nobly. It will be my pride, in a more circumstantial report of both actions, to dwell upon particular instances of individual distinction.

It affords me peculiar pleasure to report that the field-work opposite Matamoros has sustained itself handsomely during a cannonade and bombardment of 160 hours. But the pleasure is alloyed with profound regret at the loss of its heroic and indomitable commander, Major Brown, who died to-day from the effect of a shell. His loss would be a severe one to the service at any time, but to the army under my orders, it is indeed irreparable. One officer and one non-commissioned officer killed, and ten men wounded, comprise all the casualties incident to this severe bombardment.

I inadvertently omitted to mention the capture of a large number of pack-mules left in the Mexican camp.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

A few days afterwards General Taylor wrote a more detailed report of the battle. The following extracts from it afford the best general account of the actions, and do justice to the officers and men engaged in it.

“Early in the morning of the 9th instant, the enemy, who had encamped near the field of battle of the day previous, was



discovered moving by his left flank, evidently in retreat; and perhaps at the same time to gain a new position on the road to Matamoros, and there again resist our advance.

“I ordered the supply train to be strongly parked at its position, and left with it four pieces of artillery—the two eighteen-pounders which had done such good service on the previous day—and two twelve-pounders which had not been in the action. The wounded officers and men were at the same time sent back to Point Isabel. I then moved forward with the columns to the edge of the chapparal or forest, which extends to the Rio Grande, a distance of seven miles. The light companies of the first brigade, under Captain C. F. Smith, 2d artillery, and a select detachment of light troops, the whole under the command of Captain McCall, 4th infantry, were thrown forward into the chapparal, to feel the enemy, and ascertain his position. About three o'clock, I received a report from the advance, that the enemy was in position on the road, with at least two pieces of artillery. The command was immediately put in motion, and at about four o'clock I came up with Captain McCall, who reported the enemy in force in our front, occupying a ravine which intersects the road and is skirted by thickets of dense chapparal. Ridgely's battery and the advance under Captain McCall were at once thrown forward on the road, and into the chapparal on either side, while the 5th infantry and one wing of the 4th were thrown into the forest on the left, and the 3d and the other wing of the 4th, on the right of the road. These corps were employed as skirmishers to cover the battery and engage the Mexican infantry. Captain McCall's command became at once engaged with the enemy, while the light artillery, though in a very exposed position, did great execution. The enemy had at least eight pieces of artillery, and maintained an incessant fire upon our advance.

“The action now became general, and although the enemy's infantry gave way before the steady fire and resistless progress of our own, yet his artillery was still in position to check our advance—several pieces occupying the pass across the ravine, which he had chosen for his position. Perceiving that no de-

cisive advantage could be gained until this artillery was silenced, I ordered Captain May to charge the batteries with his squadron of dragoons. This was gallantly and effectually executed; the enemy was driven from his guns, and General La Vega, who remained alone at one of the batteries, was taken prisoner. The squadron, which suffered much in this charge, not being immediately supported by infantry, could not retain possession of the artillery taken, but it was completely silenced. In the mean time, the Eighth Infantry had been ordered up, and had become warmly engaged on the right of the road. This regiment, and a part of the Fifth, were now ordered to charge the batteries, which was handsomely done, and the enemy driven from his artillery and his position on the left of the road.

“The light companies of the First brigade, and the Third and Fourth regiments of infantry, had been deployed on the right of the road, where, at various points, they became briskly engaged with the enemy. A small party under Captain Buchanan and Lieutenants Wood and Hays, Fourth Infantry, composed chiefly of men of that regiment, drove the enemy from a breastwork which he occupied, and captured a piece of artillery. An attempt to recover this piece was repelled by Captain Barbour, Third Infantry. The enemy was at last completely driven from his position on the right of the road, and retreated precipitately, leaving baggage of every description. The Fourth Infantry took possession of a camp where the head-quarters of the Mexican general-in-chief were established. All his official correspondence was captured at this place.

“The artillery battalion (excepting the flank companies) had been ordered to guard the baggage train, which was parked some distance in the rear. The battalion was now ordered up to pursue the enemy, and with the Third Infantry, Captain Ker’s dragoons, and Captain Duncan’s battery, followed him rapidly to the river, making a number of prisoners. Great numbers of the enemy were drowned in attempting to cross the river near the town. The corps last mentioned encamped near the river; the remainder of the army on the field of battle.

“The strength of our marching force on this day, as exhibited in the annexed field report, was one hundred and seventy-three officers, and two thousand and forty-nine men—aggregate, two thousand two hundred and twenty-two. The actual number engaged with the enemy did not exceed one thousand and seven hundred. Our loss was three officers killed and twelve wounded; thirty-six men killed and seventy-one wounded. Among the officers killed, I have to regret the loss of Lieutenant Inge, Second Dragoons, who fell at the head of his platoon, while gallantly charging the enemy’s battery; of Lieutenant Cochrane, of the Fourth, and Lieutenant Chadbourne, of the Eighth Infantry, who likewise met their death in the thickest of the fight. The officers wounded were Lieutenant Colonel Payne, inspector general; Lieutenant Dobbins, Third Infantry, serving with the Light Infantry advance, slightly; Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh, Fifth Infantry, severely (twice); Captain Hooe, Fifth Infantry, severely (right arm since amputated); Lieutenant Fowler, Fifth Infantry, slightly; Captain Montgomery, Eighth Infantry, slightly; Lieutenants Gates and Jordan, Eighth Infantry, severely (each twice); Lieutenants Selden, Maclay, Burbank, and Morris, Eighth Infantry, slightly. A statement of the killed and wounded is annexed herewith.

“I have no accurate data from which to estimate the enemy’s force on this day. He is known to have been reinforced after the action of the 8th, both by cavalry and infantry, and no doubt to an extent at least equal to his loss on that day. It is probable that six thousand men were opposed to us, and in a position chosen by themselves, and strongly defended with artillery. The enemy’s loss was very great. Nearly two hundred of his dead were buried by us on the day succeeding the battle. His loss in killed, wounded, and missing, in the two affairs of the 8th and 9th, is, I think, moderately estimated at one thousand men.

“Our victory has been decisive. A small force has overcome immense odds of the best troops that Mexico can furnish—veteran regiments perfectly equipped and appointed. Eight



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pieces of artillery, several colours and standards, a great number of prisoners, including fourteen officers, and a large amount of baggage and public property have fallen into our hands.

“The causes of victory are doubtless to be found in the superior quality of our officers and men. I have already, in former reports, paid a general tribute to the admirable conduct of the troops on both days. It now becomes my duty—and I feel it to be one of great delicacy—to notice individuals. In so extensive a field as that of the 8th, and in the dense cover where most of the action of the 9th was fought, I could not possibly be witness to more than a small portion of the operations of the various corps; and I must, therefore, depend upon the reports of subordinate commanders, which I respectfully enclose herewith.

“Colonel Twiggs, the second in command, was particularly active on both days in executing my orders, and directing the operations of the right wing. Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh, commanding the Fifth Infantry, Lieutenant Colonel Garland, commanding the Third brigade, Lieutenant Colonel Belknap, commanding the First brigade, Lieutenant Colonel Childs, commanding the Artillery Battalion, Major Allen, Captains L. N. Morris and Montgomery, commanding respectively the Fourth, Third, and Eighth regiments of Infantry, were zealous in the performance of their duties, and gave examples to their commands of cool and fearless conduct. Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh repulsed with his regiment a charge of lancers in the action of Palo Alto, and shared with it in the honours and dangers of the following day, being twice severely wounded. Lieutenant Colonel Belknap headed a charge of the Eighth Infantry, which resulted in driving the enemy from his guns, and leaving us in possession of that part of the field.

“Captain Duncan and Lieutenant Ridgely deserve especial notice for the gallant and efficient manner in which they manœuvred and served their batteries. The impression made by Captain Duncan’s battery upon the extreme right of the enemy’s line, at the affair of Palo Alto, contributed largely to the

result of the day ; while the terrible fire kept up by Lieutenant Ridgely, in the affair of the 9th, inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy. The eighteen-pounder battery, which played a conspicuous part in the action of the 8th, was admirably served by Lieutenant Churchill, Third Artillery, assisted by Lieutenant Wood, Topographical Engineers. The charge of cavalry on the 9th, was gallantly led by Captain May, and had complete success.

“ Captain McCall, Fourth Infantry, rendered distinguished service with the advanced corps under his orders. Its loss, in killed and wounded, will show how closely it was engaged. I may take this occasion to say that, in two former instances, Captain McCall has rendered valuable service as a partisan officer. In this connection, I would mention the services of Captain Walker, of the Texas Rangers, who was in both affairs with his company, and who has performed very meritorious service as a spy and partisan.

“ I must beg leave to refer to the reports of subordinate commanders for the names of many officers, non-commissioned officers and privates, who were distinguished for good conduct on both days. Instances of individual gallantry and personal conflict with the enemy were not wanting in the affair of the 9th, but cannot find place in a general report. The officers serving in the staffs of the different commanders, are particularly mentioned by them.

“ I derived efficient aid on both days from all the officers of my staff. Captain Bliss, assistant adjutant general, Lieutenant Colonel Payne, inspector general, Lieutenant Eaton, A. D. C., Captain Waggaman, commissary of subsistence, Lieutenant Scarret, engineer, and Lieutenants Blake and Meade, topographical engineers, promptly conveyed my orders to every part of the field. Lieutenant Colonel Payne was wounded in the affair of the 9th, and I have already had occasion to report the melancholy death of Lieutenant Blake, by accident, in the interval between the two engagements. Major Craig and Lieutenant Brereton, of the ordnance department, were actively engaged in their appropriate duties, and Surgeon Craig, medical

director, superintended in person the arduous service of the field hospitals. I take this occasion to mention generally the devotion to duty of the medical staff of the army, who have been untiring in their exertions both in the field and in the hospitals, to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded of both armies. Captains Crossman and Myres of the quartermaster's department, who had charge of the heavy supply train at both engagements, conducted it in a most satisfactory manner, and finally brought it up without the smallest loss, to its destination.

"I enclose an inventory of the Mexican property captured on the field, and also a sketch of the field of 'Resaca de la Palma,' and of the route from Point Isabel, made by my aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Eaton. One regimental colour, (Battalion of Tampico,) and many standards and guidons of cavalry were taken at the affair of the 9th. I would be pleased to receive your instructions as to the disposition to be made of these trophies—whether they shall be sent to Washington, &c."

The victory of Resaca de la Palma was a proper sequel to that of Palo Alto. Well as General Taylor knew himself, confidently as he trusted his officers and men before a blow had passed on either side, and well prepared as he may have been, while encamped opposite Matamoros for an assault, there can be no doubt that his situation, before the battles of the 8th and 9th of May was very critical. It was the misfortune of the Mexicans to have generals, who, however skilful in action, were tardy in their movements, and deficient in expedients, and incapable of taking advantage of circumstances palpably in their favour. The American army reached the banks of the Rio Grande, after its march from Corpus Christi, on the 28th of March. No effort had been made to resist its original progress. The passage of the Arroyo Colorado, was permitted, as has been seen, without the firing of a gun. So the original occupation of Point Isabel—a position easily fortified—was allowed, when ordinary military forecast on the part of the Mexican commander should have taught him, that General Taylor could not leave that post in his rear occupied



by an enemy. But the fatal error of all, for which Arista is responsible, is that he permitted Point Isabel, the depot of the American stores, to remain in the possession of a small garrison for four weeks, when at any moment during that time, he might have thrown an overwhelming force across the Rio Grande and made himself master of the place. Had he done this, he might at least have afforded his unfortunate country one achievement to boast of, in a war which from first to last is a chapter in her history of unmitigated disaster and sorrow. This hypothesis does not carry with it a doubt of the ability of Taylor's little army to have met the enemy as efficiently at any moment, as on the days when it proved victorious against more than thrice its force. But it shows that for the Mexicans the only chance of even embarrassing the Americans was thrown away, and the latter were suffered to repel the first formidable opposition to their progress, with a degree of extraordinary and glorious success, which coloured their hopes, added vigour to their energies, and assurance to their courage.

If the carnage among the Mexicans on the 8th excited the pity even of their enemies, that of the 9th must have appealed still more to their sympathies. The evening closed on hundreds of them, wounded, dying, and dead upon the field and on the road to the river. In the panic of flight, self-preservation was the single thought of each individual. The bleeding and the exhausted were borne down and forsaken by the sound and the strong. The parties on foot were trampled by the cavalry; and none of the multitude fleeing from their foes, found help or comfort from their friends. The thickets and the hollows, distant from the scene of strife, long afterwards told the story of many a wounded soldier, who had struggled on to some secluded spot, there to linger, to thirst, to hunger, to bleed, to faint, and to perish, alone in his long and varied agony.

If General Taylor, in the stern duty of the battle, proved his devotion to the mission he had accepted, he equally testified, when its labour was done, his tender consideration for all who had suffered in it. The wounded on both sides received all

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the care that the occasion permitted. Through the night the medical staff of his army were labouring to relieve them, and in the morning he sent to Matamoros for Mexican surgeons to further attend upon their countrymen. The same day was spent in collecting as many of the dead as could be seen on the battle-ground, and paying to their remains the last honours of war. In the same graves were laid those who had met as enemies, and had fallen striving for life against life. The field was indeed theirs, but not as they had hoped to gain it.

On the 11th, General Taylor returned to Point Isabel (the army have proceeded to its camp opposite Matamoros), for the purpose of conferring with Commodore Conner. Before his departure the following official acknowledgment was made of the gallantry and good conduct of the troops.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation,  
Resaca de la Palma, May 11, 1846.

The commanding general congratulates the army under his command upon the signal success which has crowned its recent operations against the enemy. The coolness and steadiness of the troops during the action of the 8th, and the brilliant impetuosity with which the enemy's position and artillery were carried on the 9th, have displayed the best qualities of the American soldier. To every officer and soldier of his command, the general returns his thanks for the noble manner in which they have sustained the honour of the service and of the country. While the main body of the army has been thus actively employed, the garrison left opposite Matamoros has rendered no less distinguished service, by sustaining a severe cannonade and bombardment for many successive days. The army and the country, while justly rejoicing in this triumph of our arms, will deplore the loss of many brave officers and men who fell gallantly in the hour of combat.

It being necessary for the commanding general to visit Point Isabel on public business, Col. Twiggs will assume command of the corps of the army near Matamoros, including the garrison of the field-work. He will occupy the former lines of

the army, making such dispositions for defence and for the comfort of his command as he may deem advisable. He will hold himself strictly on the defensive until the return of the commanding general.

By order of Brig. Gen. Taylor.

W. W. J. BLISS, Act. Adj. General.

In contrast with this congratulation of the victorious general, is the subjoined manifesto to the Mexican army. It is elevated in spirit and superior in style to the ordinary official papers of the nation. There is a frank avowal of defeat and an honourable resolution to wipe off disgrace.

The Commander-in-chief of the Department of Tamaulipas to the Troops  
under his command.

FELLOW-CITIZENS: The afternoon of the 8th of this month our brothers of Matamoros have fought with intrepidity and enthusiasm in the Tanque del Ramerino. On the 9th they charged again with the same ardour. But fate has not crowned our efforts. The enemy passed from the fort, favoured by the dense smoke of a wood on fire, which protected them from our shot. Thus have our enemies escaped!

Soldiers! another time we shall conquer. Such is the fate of war, a defeat to-day and glory to-morrow; that glory which shall be ours at the end of this holy struggle. The God of battles is trying our valour, but he has not abandoned us. We know how to conquer, and we know how to suffer.

Soldiers! the lamentation of the soldier for the companion who dies on the field of battle ought to be a shot well-aimed at the enemy. Those are the tears which our brothers require of our love. Their tomb must be raised in the American camp. The corpses of the Yankees ought to form their mausoleums.

Soldiers! if we have lost some of our brothers, the glory will be greater, there will be fewer conquerors; it is not the number which gives victory. There were but three hundred Spartans, and the powerful Xerxes did not cross the Thermopylæ. The celebrated army of the great Napoleon perished



in Spain at the hands of a defenceless people, but they were free and intrepid, and were fighting for their liberty.

Fellow soldiers! shall we do less than they did? We are fighting for our liberty, our religion, our country, our cradles, our graves. Let him who does not wish to die a traitor, him who wishes to deserve the tears of his children, let him take breath and sustain his courage. He must not faint, he must not fear, but what have we to fear? The heart tells us that in it we shall find all that is requisite; and our hearts we will oppose to the enemy.

Soldiers! vengeance for our brothers! glory for our children! honour for our country!

We defend those cherished feelings. Do not fear. I swear to you that if the day be a labourious one, our glory will be sweeter; but glory we will have, and your general and companion will attain it with your loyalty and valour.

ANASTASIO PARRODE.

Tampico, May 13th, 1846.

Unfortunately for Mexico, her chiefs are more prone to "swear" what they will do, than to prove by deeds their "loyalty and valour." All accounts of the battles of the 8th and 9th of May agree in awarding to the Mexican soldiers the merit of courage and perseverance, and if, with these qualities, they were beaten by one-third their number of our troops, the reason is, in part at least, to be found in the incompetency and cowardice of their officers. That there is ground for this assertion, beyond the fact that the latter suffered little, while their men were decimated by our arms, may be shown by the following extract from Mayer's excellent work on Mexico, written at a time when her peaceful relations with the United States forbade any bias in the author's view of her institutions and people. In a notice of a review of troops in the capital in 1842, Mr. Mayer says:

"I have seldom seen better-looking regiments in Europe than the Eleventh Infantry, under the command of Lombardini. The arms are clean and bright, and the officers of division appear to be well-trained, and to have imparted their training

to the men. On the 13th of June, 1842, about eight thousand troops were brought together to be reviewed by General Santa Anna on the meadows south of the city. In line they had an extremely martial bearing. \* \* \* Excellent and daring riders as are all the Mexicans, they must ever have a decided advantage in their cavalry, and although they do not present so splendid an appearance in equipments as some other regiments, I have no doubt they constitute the most effective arm of the Mexican service. Indeed, almost all the foreigners, and even Texans, with whom I have spoken in regard to the qualities of these men, concur in a high estimate of the Mexican soldier, although they do not think so well of the Mexican officers. This, in all probability, arises from the irregular manner in which persons arrive at command, and the want of soldier-like education and discipline." These remarks apply to the commissioned officers. Of the non-commissioned officers, who, it may be presumed, belong to the same class of people as the men, the author says: "The drilling of the men is severe and constant. The sergeant is generally a well-trained soldier." And again, of the men and superior officers he remarks: "That the Mexicans are brave none will doubt, who read the history of their War of Independence, although the bad discipline of their officers has prevented the very eminent exhibition of this quality in their foreign battles."

Such, then, is the military character of the enemy with whom General Taylor was brought into conflict. To explain thus one cause of the defeat of their armies does not detract from the merit of his victories. Inequality there must have been either in material, discipline, generalship, arms, or position, to account for the triumph of two thousand men over six thousand, in two distinct battles on two successive days. In discipline, the Mexicans were not deficient. Their arms were perfect, their position formidable. The excellent material of their ranks has been shown. The want, therefore, was of officers worthy of the troops, and this want was doubly felt in a contest with an enemy whose officers were not only competent in the technics of their duty, but thoroughly self-devoted, wholly reckless

of personal danger—from the commander-in-chief to the corporal, ever in the front, where the fight was hottest, where death was surest. The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma afforded many brilliant illustrations of this remark. The descriptions of them given above, designedly general in their character, do not comprehend many anecdotes of individual heroism, which would necessarily impair a broad and connected view of the management, and result of either. A few examples, however, in this place, may serve to confirm the opinion of the superiority of the American officers, as a class, compared with the Mexican, and to extend the record of acts which their countrymen must cherish with pride and gratitude. Mr. Thorpe's spirited narrative, "Our Army on the Rio Grande," furnishes some of these instances. Others are selected from private letters, and the newspapers of the day.

When the Mexican Lancers were charging our right at Palo Alto, Lieutenant Ridgely's horse was shot from under him, and the same ball probably that caused the death of his steed, alarmed the horses at one of his caissons, which sprang madly forward in range of the gun. Lieutenant Ridgely, regardless of personal danger, rushed forward between the two contending fires, seized the front horses by the head, and brought them into their places; thus saving not only his horses, but the ammunition of his battery.

It was the Fifth regiment of Infantry which was ordered to meet this charge of the Lancers, and, when thrown forward for the purpose, General Taylor rode up, and said, "Men, I place myself in your square!" Could they falter, with such an evidence of their commander's valour, and of his confidence in them?

Towards the close of the same action, the Mexicans, as has been mentioned, formed a desperate resolution to silence the eighteen-pounders, and Ringgold's pieces, which hurled constant destruction into their ranks. To accomplish this, they poured from their batteries a hurricane of grape and cannister, killing and wounding many of the Fourth, and, among them, the gallant Captain Page. At that moment, Colonel Payne,



inspector general of the army, and one of Taylor's aids, came and asked permission to sight one of Ringgold's guns. He had just done so, with effect, when he heard his name beseechingly called by one of the soldiers, and, turning round, discovered Ringgold wounded, as has been described. Amid the shower of balls, which still continued, Colonel Payne remained with him to sustain him, and to hear, what he then supposed might be, the last words of the dying man.

At Resaca de la Palma, Lieut. John A. Richey, who in a subsequent service fell a sacrifice, took part in a daring adventure, which he thus described in a letter: "A short time after the battle began, several of us became separated in the brush, and started forward, with the few men we could collect at the moment, to take a battery of the Mexicans that was blazing upon us. We dashed forward into the ravine, across the stream which ran through it, and, clambering up the opposite bank, rushed across the openings of the chapparal towards the battery. While passing through, I got separated for about ten minutes from Lieutenants Woods and Hays; when I rejoined them, they had captured the cannon: they had dashed onward upon the enemy *attended by only one man*. The cannoneers immediately turned and fled. Before doing so they had set fire to the priming-tube, the gun being loaded. The match was about to ignite the powder, when Lieut. Woods knocked the priming off with his sword. In the mean time some Mexicans ran to the mules attached to the piece by a long pole, and endeavoured to drag it off. Hays, perceiving their intention, sprang forward and snapped his pistol at them. At the same moment Woods caught hold of the driving-reins. By this time our party was reinforced, and moved forward along the road, firing all the time and driving the enemy before us. We proceeded in this way with about twenty men. Woods now separated from us, and we were joined by Lieuts. Angur and Cochrane of the 4th. Our little party was composed of men belonging to every regiment in the army. We advanced a great distance in front of the main body and were surrounded on all sides by the Mexicans." Capt. Barbour soon joined

this bold party. It was on this occasion that Lieut. Cochrane fell, when immediately afterwards it was charged by the lancers. Corporal Chisholm shot the Colonel who led the charge. As the officer fell, the corporal was seen to hand him his canteen of water—and, but a moment afterwards, Chisholm himself was lying dead.

The famous charge of May's dragoons, on the 9th, has already been described. The following account of incidents connected with it is by Sergeant Milton, one of his officers.

“On the second day, at Resaca de la Palma, our troop stood anxiously waiting for the signal to be given, and never had I looked upon men upon whose countenances were more clearly expressed a fixed determination to win. The lips of some were pale with excitement, and their eyes wore that fixed expression which betokens mischief; others with shut teeth would quietly laugh and catch a tighter grip of the rein, or seat themselves with care and firmness in the saddle, while quiet words of confidence and encouragement were passed from each to his neighbour. All at once Captain May rode to the front of his troop—every rein and sabre was tightly grasped. Raising himself, and pointing at the battery, he shouted, ‘Men, *follow!*’ There was now a clattering of hoofs and a rattling of sabre-sheaths—the fire of the enemy's guns was partly drawn by Lieutenant Ridgely, and the next moment we were sweeping like the wind up the ravine. I was in a squad of about nine men, who were separated by a shower of grape from the battery, and we were in advance, May leading. He turned his horse opposite the breast-work, in front of the guns, and with another shout ‘to follow,’ leaped over them. Several of the horses did follow, but mine, being new and not well-trained, refused; two others balked, and their riders started down the ravine to turn the breast-work where the rest of the troop had entered. I made another attempt to clear the guns with my horse, turning him around—feeling all the time secure at thinking the guns discharged—I put his head towards them and gave him spur, but he again balked; so, turning his head down the ravine, I too started to ride round the breast-work.

‘As I came down a lancer dashed at me with lance in rest. With my sabre I parried his thrust, only receiving a slight flesh wound, from its point, in the arm, which felt at the time like the prick of a pin. The lancer turned and fled; at that moment a ball passed through my horse on the left side and shattered my right side. The shot killed the horse instantly, and he fell upon my left leg, fastening me by his weight to the earth. There I lay, right in the midst of the action, where carnage was riding riot, and every moment the shot, from our own and the Mexican guns, tearing up the earth around me. I tried to raise my horse so as to extricate my leg, but I had already grown so weak with my wound that I was unable, and, from the mere attempt, I fell back exhausted. To add to my horror a horse, who was careering about riderless, within a few yards of me, received a wound, and he commenced struggling and rearing with pain. Two or three times he came near falling on me, but at length, with a scream of agony and a bound, he fell dead—his body touching my own fallen steed. What I had been in momentary dread of now occurred—my wounded limb, which was lying across the horse, received another ball in the ankle.

“I now felt disposed to give up; and, exhausted through pain and excitement, a film gathered over my eyes, which I thought was the precursor of dissolution. From this hopeless state I was aroused by a wounded Mexican, calling out to me, ‘*Bueno Americano*,’ and turning my eyes towards the spot, I saw that he was holding a certificate and calling to me. The tide of action now rolled away from me, and hope again sprung up. The Mexican uniforms began to disappear from the chaparral, and squadrons of our troops passed in sight, apparently in pursuit. While I was thus nursing the prospect of escape, I beheld, not far from me, a villainous-looking *ranchero*, armed with an American sergeant’s short sword, despatching a wounded American soldier, whose body he robbed. The next he came to was a Mexican, whom he served the same way, and thus I looked on while he murderously slew four. I drew an undischarged pistol from my holsters, and, laying myself along



my horse's neck, watched him, expecting to be the next victim ; but something frightened him from his vulture-like business, and he fled in another direction. I need not say that had he visited me I should have taken one more shot at the enemy, and would have died content had I succeeded in making such an assassin bite the dust. Two hours after, I had the pleasure of shaking some of my comrades by the hand, who were picking up the wounded. They lifted my Mexican friend, too, and I am pleased to say he, as well as myself, live to fight over again the sanguine fray of *Resaca de la Palma*."

Another writer relates this instance of personal bravery :

"During the progress of the action, Lieutenant Lincoln, of the Eighth regiment, made a charge upon a body of Mexicans lodged in a thicket of chapparal, who were pouring a destructive fire upon his regiment as it advanced up the road. In the midst of the conflict, he saw Lieutenant Jordan, (who had personally charged the enemy,) wounded upon the ground, with a Mexican over him, in the act of running a bayonet through his body ; Lincoln sprang forward, and the Mexican faltering, in alarm, ran his bayonet through the arm, instead of the breast of Jordan. At the same instant, Lincoln cleft his scull. This gallant officer, with his sergeant, engaged in a conflict with others of the enemy, causing them to retreat, after having slain three of them with their own hands. Lieutenant Chadbourne, also of the Eighth, after distinguishing himself for his bravery, in one of these skirmishes fell mortally wounded, at the head of his command."

When May had captured the battery, being unable with his handful of men to retain it, he rode back to the Eighth for support. Col. Belknap immediately ordered the Eighth to form in the road, when he led it on in person. While advancing he was joined by a part of the Fifth Infantry under Captain Scott. For an instant the fire of the Mexicans checked the advance, when Col. Belknap sprang forward, and seizing one of their standards, waved on his troops, who were now, with the entire Fifth regiment, engaged in a hand-to-hand conflict with the celebrated Tampico veterans. In the charge Col. Belknap had

the staff of his standard shot away, and at the same instant his horse, coming among a pile of dead and wounded artillerists, made a sudden movement aside and threw his rider. The Eighth took up the cry that their commander was killed, and dealt their blows the heavier, when he again appeared at the head of his column.

The indomitable bravery of Lieut. Col. McIntosh has already been mentioned. During a charge, he cut his way through a wall of chapparal, and just as he reached the opposite side, his horse was shot and fell. The Mexicans rushed on him, and he defended himself against odds, until a bayonet passed through his mouth and out below his ear. He raised his sword to strike the assailant, when another bayonet broke his arm, and a third pierced his hip, and he fell literally pinned to the earth. Soon afterwards Duncan came hurrying forward with his battery, McIntosh having been left by his enemies, and regained his feet. Duncan, not perceiving his condition, requested his support. The Colonel turning presented a most ghastly appearance, from his face down covered with blood. Yet he answered, although speaking with difficulty, "I will give you the support you want;" and added, "show me my regiment!"

A witness of the whole action, in concluding a descriptive letter says:

"How can I describe the personal acts of bravery, not only in one instance but in twenty, not simply by the officer but by the common soldier. The whole battle was fought by individual squads, led sometimes by an officer, and frequently by the non-commissioned officer. I could not say too much for every man engaged. So eager were our men for the fight, that I cannot better describe their enthusiasm than to give you the idea that struck me. It was this. Every man—officer and soldier—seemed impressed with the idea that there was but a given quantity of fighting to be had, not enough for every man to have his fill of it, and therefore it became every man to get what he could as soon as possible.

"Instances there were where one man, charging upon their

batteries, leaped astride their pieces, and holding on with one hand, beat off their gunners, or were themselves cut down."

Of devotion such as this, it is needless to multiply examples. To conquer such men were impossible. Only their equals in daring and magnanimity could ever maintain with them an equal contest.

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## CHAPTER IX.

The 8th of May at Fort Brown—Anxiety of the Garrison—News of Palo Alto—Bombardment on the 9th—Mexican Fugitives seen—Recklessness in their Panic—Disappointment and Suffering in Matamoros—The Wounded and Dead—Despatches from Taylor—Incidents of La Vega's Capture—Taylor's Courtesy to him—Taylor's return to the Rio Grande—Commodore Conner—Barita taken—Preparations to Bombard Matamoros—Armistice offered and refused—Arista's final Retreat—Occupation of Matamoros—Despatch from General Taylor—Arista's report of his Retreat—Anecdote of Ampudia—Document found in Arista's Tent—Result of Taylor's Operations.

It was on the 8th of May, about two hours after mid-day, that the garrison of Fort Brown heard, during a brief pause in the bombardment, which had been braved for more than a hundred hours, the distant thunder of other guns. Rapid and constant was the echo, and it was welcomed as the harbinger of relief. Taylor was on his march, and Arista had met him. So the garrison confidently felt, when the roar of the battle on the plain of Palo Alto was borne faintly to the banks of the Rio Grande. Still the batteries from the surrounding works of the Mexicans maintained their discharges upon the fort. The shells fell thick and fast until sunset, and, in the mean time, infantry and cavalry of the enemy were seen crossing the river, above and below, to reinforce Arista's army. Every heart of the gallant band within the entrenchment beat quickly with intense excitement. Their friends were few, their foes were many, and upon the issue of the fight was their own safety. As evening came on, a Mexican, bearing a white flag, was seen running



towards the fort. He claimed protection, and was admitted. From him the story of the day was learned. The armies had met, and Arista was driven back. The trust of the garrison in Taylor's return was not in vain. He had promised, and through seven thousand bayonets and lances he would come.

Through the night of the 8th the bombardment of the Fort was suspended, and its weary tenants enjoyed by turns their first repose, although their guns were not forsaken. On the morning of the 9th the storm of round shot and shells was renewed. With occasional intervals, it continued until two o'clock. There was then a calm, and in that calm, the brave commander, Major Brown, who had lingered under his wound for three days, peacefully died. His sufferings were great, and proved his fortitude equal to his courage. While his friends were still gathered near his bed, distant cannon were again heard;—distant, yet nearer than on the preceding day. The din of the battle grew by degrees yet louder and nearer. Then there were pauses, and again the voice of the deep artillery rolled from beyond the chapparal. The batteries at Matamoros now resumed their futile fire, and more rapidly than ever cast their balls in the midst of the American works. But they were unheeded. The distant fight alone engaged the thoughts of the besieged. Its cannon for a time wholly ceased, and then volleys of musketry were distinctly heard telling a closer encounter. Hope and apprehension were painfully mingled, and expectation was tortured with uncertainty. So wore the afternoon away, the noise of the contest becoming by degrees nearer, but more irregular. Then there was a perfect calm. The battle was over. The field had been lost and won. The sun was still above the horizon, when, breaking through the chapparal, parties of Mexican troops were seen rushing in full retreat to the river. In an instant the parapets of the Fort were manned, and cheer after cheer told the exultation of its defenders, while their ammunition, long and carefully reserved, was used to bear more desperate confusion into the masses of the fugitives. Down they pressed to the water's edge, each one reckless except of his own safety. In an instant the boats

were crowded with a terrified multitude, too great for them to bear, and many were forced into the river to meet beneath its waves the death from which they were fleeing.

At one of the crossings there was but a single flat. Into this a mass of foot-soldiers had rushed, when, before it pushed from the landing, a troop of cavalry, speeding on in uncontrollable fear, spurred their horses aboard and drove the defenceless men into the water, where all sank down, and most to rise no more, except to buffet the current for a time, vainly grasping one another in the agonies of their final struggle. Friend knew not friend, nor brother, brother. For a moment the influence of a priest, who, in his robes with crucifix in hand, exhorted another band to patience, checked the pressure of the maddened crowd. But the next, another troop of horse swept down the bank, and priest and soldiers driven before them, perished also in the stream.

Night closed the pursuit, and with it the immediate fears of the routed Mexicans. But through all its watches, they were heard still hastening across the Rio Grande. The wounded, cruelly *slung* in sacks upon the backs of mules, uttered piteous groans and shrieks as they were borne along, and many were found dead, suffocated by the water, or exhaustion. Matamoros had been prepared for the celebration of a victory. Ball-rooms were garlanded, and lamps were trimmed, the bells were manned for merry peals, and music, and glad voices and fond eyes waited to welcome back the conquerors. But through that dismal night, Matamoros witnessed only scenes of pain, of anguish, of rage and shame. Bands of brutal soldiers and lawless ruffians roamed about the streets, while the panic-stricken inhabitants shut themselves up in their homes to await what fate they knew not, or gathering what precious goods their hands could bear, fled to the country to wander they knew not whither.

The day following the battle of Resaca de la Palma was spent in collecting and burying the dead. In this sacred duty, friend and foe shared alike at the hands of the American soldiers. On the 11th an exchange of prisoners was effected,

and Capt. Thornton, Capt. Hardee, and their dragoons, who had been prisoners since their surprise and capture by Torreon's brigade, were again at liberty among their victorious friends. They had received courteous attention and kindness from the Mexicans during their captivity.

While General Taylor proceeded to Point Isabel for the purpose of conferring with Commodore Conner, the army under Col. Twiggs took up its former position on the left bank of the Rio Grande. The annexed despatch of the General, in part explains his personal movements from the day of the last battle to its date.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Point Isabel, Texas, May 12, 1846.

SIR: I am making a hasty visit to this place, for the purpose of having an interview with Commodore Conner, whose squadron is now at anchor off the harbour, and arranging with him a combined movement up the river. I avail myself of the brief time at my command to report that the main body of the army is now occupying its former position opposite Matamoros. The Mexican forces are almost disorganized, and I shall lose no time in investing Matamoros, and opening the navigation of the river.

I regret to report that Major Ringgold died the morning of the 11th instant, of the severe wound received in the action of Palo Alto. With the exception of Captain Page, whose wound is dangerous, the other wounded officers are doing well. In my report of the second engagement, I accidentally omitted the name of Lieutenant Dobbins, 3d infantry, among the officers slightly wounded, and desire that the omission may be supplied in the despatch itself. I am under the painful necessity of reporting that Lieutenant Blake, Topographical Engineers, after rendering distinguished service in my staff during the affair of the 8th instant, accidentally shot himself with a pistol on the following day, and expired before night.

It has been quite impossible as yet to furnish detailed reports of our engagements with the enemy, or even accurate



returns of the killed and wounded. Our loss is not far from three officers and forty men killed, and thirteen officers and one hundred men wounded; while that of the enemy has, in all probability, exceeded three hundred killed; more than two hundred have been buried by us on the two fields of battle.

I have exchanged a sufficient number of prisoners to recover the command of Captain Thornton. The wounded prisoners have been sent to Matamoros—the wounded officers on their parole. General Vega and a few other officers have been sent to New Orleans, having declined a parole, and will be reported to Major General Gaines. I am not conversant with the usages of war in such cases, and beg that such provision may be made for these prisoners as may be authorized by law. Our own prisoners have been treated with great kindness by the Mexican officers.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

In the midst of the excitement of preparing for an attack on Matamoros, and for the capture of the towns tributary to it, General Taylor did not overlook the firm and energetic conduct of the officers and men whom he had left at Point Isabel on the 7th of May. The following Order recognizes their merit.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Fort Polk, Texas, May 12, 1846.

As a mark of respect to the chief magistrate of the republic, the work concluded at this place to cover the main depot of the army will be known as "Fort Polk."

The commanding general takes this occasion to express his satisfaction with the dispositions made for the defence and protection of this point, so vitally important to the efficiency and security of the army. To Major Munroe, the commanding officer, Captain Saunders, of the Engineers, Majors Thomas and McRee, and Captains Sibley and Hill, of the quartermas-

ter's department, Captain Ramsay, of the ordnance, and Lieutenant Montgomery, of the subsistence departments, credit is especially due for their zeal and activity. The general returns his thanks to the numerous citizens who volunteered their services in defence of the depot. Their assistance added materially to its strength, and to his confidence in its ability to resist an attack. The reinforcements from the brig Lawrence, under Lieutenant Renshaw, and the large force of seamen and marines so promptly furnished by the squadron on its arrival, require a special acknowledgment to Commodore Conner, and Commander Mercer, of the navy. The army is deeply grateful for this support and co-operation, from a kindred branch of the public service.

By order of Brig. Gen. Taylor.

W. W. J. BLISS, Act. Adj. Gen.

An act of courtesy, on the part of the troops, and of liberality, on the part of General Taylor, to General La Vega, may here be mentioned, in connection with the incidents of that officer's introduction to the general, after his capture by Captain May. The account is furnished by a correspondent of the Baltimore Patriot.

The artillery battalion was stationed on the 9th at the outset of the chapparal, and was then formed "in square." This battalion, which had suffered the day before more than any other, except the 8th Infantry, was placed in this position for these reasons: to protect the train against a charge of the enemy's cavalry, to repair any disasters which might occur in the ordnance, and to afford fresh troops for the pursuit, when the battle was gained.

Colonel Twiggs sent for Colonel Childs, who commanded it, and turned the prisoner over to him; but Childs, having dismounted (General Vega was on foot), sent an order to his battalion, that the prisoner should be received with the honour due his rank. As soon as the prisoner issued from the chap-paral, the words "Present Arms" were given. The square "presented arms" in perfect silence, and, as he approached,

not a smile of gratification, or a word of exultation, was seen or heard; (so much for the delicacy of the common soldier, who had, perhaps, the day before, lost his nearest friend by the enemy's cannon-shot.) General Vega seemed surprised at the salute, courteously and slowly raised his hat, and the square was brought to a shoulder.

Colonel Childs then called from his position Captain Magruder, who commanded one of the companies of the square. Captain Magruder had known General Vega before, and immediately insisted upon his mounting his (Captain M.'s) horse. No sooner was this done, than it became necessary for the battalion to move on, and Captain Magruder was ordered by Colonel Childs to escort the prisoner, *in security*, with a small command, to General Taylor. Fortunately no rescue was attempted, as his command was very small, and the order was promptly executed, when General Vega was introduced on the field, by Captain Magruder, to General Taylor. General Taylor shook him warmly by the hand, and addressed to him the following handsome remarks:

“General: I do assure you, I deeply regret that this misfortune has fallen upon *you*. I regret it sincerely, and I take great pleasure in returning you the sword which you have this day worn with so much gallantry,” handing him, at the same time, the sword which General Vega had yielded to Captain May. General Vega made a suitable reply in Spanish, and was then taken charge of by Colonel Twiggs, at the colonel's own request, and entertained by him, in the most hospitable manner, in his own tent, until his departure for New Orleans.

When about to embark, General Taylor handed his prisoner a letter of introduction to General Gaines, and of credit on his own banker, which secured to him respectful consideration and comfort on his arrival in the United States.

Having arranged his business with Commodore Conner, who had, with foresight and despatch, brought his squadron to the support of Point Isabel, General Taylor started, on the morning following the interview, to return to the camp opposite Matamoras, and there begin offensive operations. On his way



He was met by a courier, informing him that the enemy was receiving reinforcements at Matamoros, and were fortifying points near the mouth of the river. One of these points was Barita, a village situated on a high bank. On hearing this report, General Taylor returned again to Point Isabel, and found there a small body of regulars and volunteers just arrived from Alabama and Louisiana, the volunteers being the first in answer to his call for additional troops. A command was immediately organised under Col. Wilson, consisting of three hundred regulars, and three hundred and fifty volunteers, with orders to proceed to Barita and take possession of it. The vessels of Commodore Conner co-operated in the expedition. Col. Wilson marched on the 15th for Brazos, and, with the aid of the squadron, crossed the river at its mouth, and marched upon the town, which he occupied without opposition on the 17th, being the first landing of an American force on the right of the Rio Grande.

The day before this expedition left Point Isabel, General Taylor also set out again on his return to the camp on the river, where he speedily arrived, and at once commenced preparations for an attack on Matamoros. It was his resolution to bombard the place if not surrendered unconditionally.

It was not until the 17th, that the mortar batteries commanding the town were ready. This delay, seemingly so little accordant with Taylor's character for energy and despatch, was not attributable to any immaturity in his plans, or any want of activity. On the contrary, he had in early season endeavoured to impress upon the War Department the necessity of supplying the usual means of prosecuting a march in an enemy's country. Especially had he solicited a ponton train in his letters of the previous year, and had his suggestions in that regard been complied with, he might have instantly pursued the enemy, after the victory of the 9th, across the Rio Grande, have occupied Matamoros, and so totally dispersed Arista's army, that not another blow could have been struck in the Northern Departments of Mexico bordering the Rio Grande.

The 17th of May, therefore, a week after the battles, offered

the first opportunity of following up their results. Orders having been given to Colonel Twiggs to cross the river, General Taylor was waited on by the Mexican general, Reguena, empowered by General Arista to treat for an armistice, until the two governments finally settled the difficulties pending. This cunning, on the part of the Mexican chief, was too apparent to General Taylor; he was aware that Matamoros was filled with the munitions of war, and time was only wanted to move them off. General Taylor replied promptly to General Reguena, that an armistice could not be granted; he recapitulated the circumstances of the preceding month, when he had himself proposed an armistice, which General Ampudia had declined. He stated that he was receiving large reinforcements—that he would not then suspend hostilities which he had not invited nor provoked; he also said that the possession of Matamoros was a “sine qua non,” and that the American troops would occupy the city, at the same time giving to General Arista and his forces leave to withdraw from the town, leaving behind the public property of every description. General Taylor remarked, that “Generals Ampudia and Arista had promised that the war should be conducted agreeably to the usage of civilized nations, and yet the Mexican forces had, in the battles of the 8th and 9th, stripped our dead and mutilated their bodies.” General Reguena replied, that “the women and rancheros did it.” “Then,” said General Taylor, “I will come over to Matamoros and control such people for them.”

General Reguena, then leaving General Taylor, promised to deliver an answer positively at three o'clock. The hour arrived but no answer. It afterwards appeared, that while the delegation was treating with General Taylor, General Arista was busy in getting out of the city; that even the promise to give General Taylor a positive answer at three o'clock was a mere subterfuge. General Arista, taking advantage of the delay, succeeded in moving much of the military stores, securing two or three pieces of cannon, and with the fragment of his army, that very night, abandoned Matamoros and fled precipitately towards Monterey. At sundown, General Taylor perceiving

that no word was to be sent to him, repaired from Fort Brown to join the army two miles above the fort, in position for crossing the Rio Grande.

Early on the morning of the 18th, the east bank was defended by two eighteen-pounders, and the three batteries of our artillery, and the crossing commenced, Col. Twiggs ordering the bands to strike up Yankee Doodle. The light companies of battalions first went over, followed by the volunteer and regular infantry.

Lieut. Hays, of the 4th infantry, and ten select men, with Captain Walker of the Rangers, first crossed the river, with orders to ascertain and report the number and position of the enemy, if near the river. Immediately after Lieut. Hays had crossed, the flank companies of the 3d, 4th, and 5th infantry, were thrown across, commanded by Captain Buchanan and Captain Larned. After these commands had crossed, Captain Smith, of the artillery battalion, crossed with two companies, followed by Captain Ker's squadron of dragoons. After this force had crossed, Ridgely's artillery was dismounted and taken over in parts. In the mean time the infantry already over had advanced, and occupied the hedge-fence covering the crossing; after occupying this position some two hours, a civil deputation from Matamoros presented itself, requesting to see General Taylor. The deputation was sent over the river, in charge of an officer, to meet the general who had not then crossed. The object of the deputation was to inform the commanding-general of the American forces, that General Arista and the Mexican troops had abandoned Matamoros, together with his sick and wounded, and wishing to know from General Taylor what treatment the city might expect from him. General Taylor, finding on inquiry that this report was true, ordered that portion of the American forces that had not crossed the river, to return to Fort Brown and cross there. General Taylor immediately despatched a staff-officer to the prefect to demand a surrender, and to come to him to confer on the subject. General Taylor informed the prefect that the civil and religious rights of the citizens would be sacredly respected. While this



was going forward, the dragoons, under Captain Ker, passed below where they had landed, and raised the national flag upon the walls of Fort Paredes.

The different regiments already on the west side of the Rio Grande, were marched to their respective places of encampment, without noise or disorder, save when the flag of our country was unexpectedly seen waving from Fort Paredes. Discipline then gave way to feeling, and nine hearty cheers rent the air, and announced the occupation of Matamoros by American troops.

That evening a small guard was established in Matamoros to keep the peace. No troops, except under command that night, visited it. The civil and religious rights of the citizens were guaranteed, and the Matamorians slept secure under the protection of the American government, a boon ever denied to them by their own.

But a single accident occurred to mar the proceedings of the day. Lieut. George Stephens, a young officer of high promise, was swept by the current from his horse while crossing the river, and was drowned. The details of the foregoing narrative are taken from a letter, addressed at the time to a southern newspaper. General Taylor's official account is subjoined.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
City of Matamoros, May 18, 1846.

SIR: I have the honour to report that my very limited means of crossing rivers prevented a complete prosecution of the victory of the 9th instant. A ponton train, the necessity of which I exhibited to the department last year, would have enabled the army to have crossed on the evening of the battle, take this city, with all the artillery and stores of the enemy, and a great number of prisoners. In short, to destroy entirely the Mexican army. But I was compelled to await the arrival of heavy mortars, with which to menace the town from the left bank, and also the accumulation of small boats. In the mean time, the enemy had somewhat recovered from the confusion of his flight, and ought still, with three thousand men left him, to have made a respectable defence. I made every preparation

to cross the river above the town, while Lieut. Col. Wilson made a diversion on the side of Barita, and the order of march was given out for one o'clock yesterday, from the camp near Fort Brown, when I was waited upon by General Reguena, empowered by General Arista, commanding-in-chief the Mexican forces, to treat for an armistice until the government should finally settle the question. I replied to this, that an armistice was out of the question; that a month since I had proposed one to General Ampudia, which was declined; that circumstances were now changed; that I was receiving large reinforcements, and could not now suspend operations which I had not invited or provoked; that the possession of Matamoros was a *sine qua non*; that our troops would occupy the town; but that General Arista might withdraw his forces, leaving the public property of every description.

An answer to the above was promised in the afternoon, but none came; and I repaired at sundown to join the army, already in position at a crossing some two miles above the town. Very early this morning the bank was occupied by two eighteen-pounders and three batteries of field artillery, and the crossing commenced: the light companies of all the battalions were first thrown over, followed by the volunteer and regular cavalry. No resistance was made, and I was soon informed from various quarters that Arista had abandoned the town, with all his troops, the evening before, leaving only the sick and wounded. I immediately despatched a staff-officer to the prefect to demand a surrender; and, in the mean time, a commission was sent by the prefect to confer with me on the same point. I gave assurance that the civil rights of the citizens would be respected, and our troops at once dropped down opposite the town, and crossed at the "Upper Ferry," the American flag being displayed at Fort Paredes, a Mexican redout near the crossing. The different corps now encamped in the outskirts of the city. To-morrow I shall make suitable arrangements for the occupation of the town, and for taking possession of the public property. More than three hundred of the enemy's wounded

have been left in the hospitals. Arista is in full retreat towards Monterey, with the fragments of his army.

I deeply regret to report that Lieut. George Stevens, a very promising young officer, of the 2d dragoons, was accidentally drowned this morning while attempting to swim the river with his squadron.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

Thus, on the 18th of May, General Taylor had firmly planted the American flag on the battlements of a Mexican city. In fulfilling his professional duty, he was scrupulous in every precaution against the evils almost inseparable from hostile invasion. The persons and property of the people of Matamoros and its vicinity were rigidly protected. The American troops were distributed in the suburbs, only a guard being allowed in the city. Colonel Twiggs was appointed "Governor," his command being stationed above the town, on the river bank. That of General Worth—who, after a temporary absence, had again joined the army—was posted below. Fort Brown was garrisoned, and the seventh regiment encamped beneath its walls. General Taylor camped out, establishing his head-quarters where a few trees aided the shade of the canvass.

Arista, with the remnant of his army, still more than equal to his conquerors in numbers, having commenced his retreat from the city, while the parley with Taylor was proceeding, continued to hasten up the river, in the direction of Camargo. Upon evacuating Matamoros, he made the following rather frank report to his superior in command of the District. The document is dated from "the Rancho de la Venada, May 18.

*"Division of the North—Commander-in-Chief—*All the means of subsistence of this division being consumed, its activity paralyzed, and its artillery diminished, while that of the enemy has been greatly increased in the number of pieces and



the calibre of his guns, in such a manner that, were he to open his fire, the city of Matamoros would be instantly destroyed, to the utter ruin of national and foreign interests, I have decided to retire from it, with the forces under my command, before being summoned, and obliged to evacuate it with dishonour, which I shall thus avoid : for the march is slow, our pieces being drawn by oxen, and our munitions in carts. My object now is to defend the soil of those departments which have been entrusted to me ; and, for that purpose, I am going to post myself at those points most convenient, and within reach of supplies, of which I will hereafter inform your highness, though your communications must seek me by the road of China, or that of Linares. The step to which I have referred has saved the national honour ; and I communicate it to your highness for your information, recommending you to secure the camp equipage, placing it in a convenient point, and preserving the sixteen pounders in that city, to which, moreover, I will order a reinforcement."

The retreat of Arista commenced in good order. A newspaper of the day supplies an anecdote connected with the pursuit which proves—if proof were wanting—how systematic was the deception practised upon the simple-minded Mexicans, by their military officers, regarding their own prowess and success in the field. The day following the occupation of Matamoros, Lieutenant Colonel Garland, with all the regular and irregular cavalry of the army, about two hundred and fifty dragoons and rangers, started in pursuit of the retreating Mexicans, with orders to harass their rear, and to capture prisoners and baggage. On the 22d, Colonel Garland returned from his pursuit. He succeeded in capturing a small rear party, after a slight show of resistance on their part, in which two Mexicans were killed, twenty-two taken prisoners, and one wagon with ammunition and clothing of an artillery company captured. Two of our own troops were slightly wounded. The scarcity of water, the barrenness of the country, and the condition of the horses, compelled Colonel Garland to return to Matamoros,

after having penetrated over sixty miles into the enemy's country.

The army of the Mexicans, under General Arista, was but twenty-four hours ahead of our cavalry, retreating in good order—our officers stopping at the *ranches* where the enemy had, the night previous. A *ranchero*, at one of these stopping places, inquired with great simplicity of Captain Graham, where the Americans were going. He was told in pursuit of the retreating Mexican army. "Retreating army!" said the fellow with astonishment; "why, General Ampudia stopped at my house last night, and said that his troops had conquered the Americans, and that he was now on his way to Mexico to take the news." The man was confounded, for it was impossible for him to believe his nation had been whipped in battle, and still more incomprehensible, that a small number of American dragoons should seriously, and for purposes of war, really drive before them over three thousand troops.

To these painful and humiliating misrepresentations were the Mexican commanders driven, in order to secure respect and ordinary hospitality from their own countrymen. It affords a painful contrast with their boasts before they had been tested in the field. Among the papers found in Arista's tent on the field of Resaca de la Palma, was the following, addressed to American soldiers, and designed to have been distributed among them. How little could its author have known his enemies! How little of the true means by which such enemies are overcome!

"Head-Quarters at Matamoras.  
April 26, 1846.

"SOLDIERS!—You have enlisted in time of peace to serve in that army for a specific term; but your obligation never implied that you were bound to violate the laws of God, and the most sacred rights of friends! The United States government, contrary to the wishes of a majority of all honest and honourable Americans, has ordered you to take *forcible* possession of the territory of a *friendly* neighbour, who has never given her consent to such occupation. In other words, while

the treaty of peace and commerce between Mexico and the United States, presuming on her strength and prosperity, and on our supposed imbecility and cowardice, attempts to make you the blind instruments of her unholy and mad ambition, and *force* you to appear as the hateful robbers of our dear homes, and the unprovoked violators of our dearest feelings as men and patriots. Such villany and outrage, I know, is perfectly repugnant to the noble sentiments of any gentleman, and it is base and foul to rush you on to certain death, in order to aggrandize a few lawless individuals, in defiance of the laws of God and man!

“It is to no purpose if they tell you, that the law of the annexation of Texas justifies your occupation of the Rio Bravo del Norte; for by this act they rob us of a great part of *Tamaulipas, Coahuili, Chihuahua, and New Mexico*; and it is barbarous to send a handful of men on such an errand against a powerful and warlike nation. Besides, the most of you are Europeans, and we are the *declared friends* of a majority of the nations of *Europe*. The North Americans are ambitious, overbearing, and insolent as a nation, and they will only make use of you as vile tools to carry out their abominable plans of pillage and rapine.

“I warn you in the name of justice, honour, and your own interests and self-respect, to abandon their desperate and unholy cause, and become *peaceful Mexican citizens*. I guaranty you, in such case, a half section of land, or three hundred and twenty acres, to settle upon, gratis. Be wise, then, and just, and honourable, and take no part in murdering us who have no unkind feelings for you. Lands shall be given to officers, serjeants, and corporals, according to rank, privates receiving three hundred and twenty acres, as stated.

“If in time of action you wish to espouse our cause, throw away your arms and run to us, and we will embrace you as true friends and Christians. It is not decent nor prudent to say more. But should any of you render important service to Mexico, you shall be accordingly considered and preferred.”



## 176 RESULT OF TAYLOR'S SUCCESSES.

Arista continued his retreat to the interior, his unfortunate troops suffering privations more trying than the toil and danger of battle. Provisions and water were scarce, and hastening on in fear of their victorious pursuers, the fatigue of forced marches added to their calamities. Under these circumstances his army became completely demoralized. A great portion of it deserted, returning home, or forming marauding parties, of which their own countrymen were the victims. It was near the end of May, when Arista, with his shattered columns, reached the hacienda of Coma, upwards of a hundred miles from Matamoros. His force had been, at the outset, sufficiently strong to enable him to leave detachments so posted as to prevent the Americans from communicating with the interior. From Coma, where he halted for repose when no longer pursued, he resumed his march and reached Monterey. Subsequently he was removed from his command, and ordered to Mexico to answer for his misconduct, or misfortunes, before a court-martial.

Thus, freed from the presence of an enemy, and absolute master of the enemy's country in the entire region where he had first met with opposition, General Taylor was obliged to await further instructions from the government, and the arrival of new troops and means of advance, before he could duly prosecute the advantages he had gained. His labours for nearly two months had been various and incessant, taxing to an extreme both mind and body. At the end of March he had left the northern side of the Nueces, with an army apparently insufficient for any successful demonstration against an enemy disposed to resist it. Before the end of June, he found himself on the southern side of the Rio Grande, having annihilated all opposition to his presence. The occupation of that ground defines the first period of his brilliant operations in Mexico.

## CHAPTER X.

War recognized by Congress—Men and Money voted—General Taylor embarrassed—Inadequate means of advancing—Letter to the Department—Difficulties and Wants explained—Further correspondence—Suggestions regarding his advance—Letter from the Secretary of War—Taylor recommended to advance on Monterey—His Views on the Campaign requested—Continued Difficulties—Further despatches—Arrival of Volunteers—Causes of Inactivity explained—Minor Expeditions—More Troops—Letter from General Scott—News of Taylor's Victories reaches the United States—Popular Enthusiasm—Created Brigadier General by Brevet—President's Letter—Thanks voted by Louisiana Legislature—Deputation to Taylor—His Speech to the Committee—Made a full Major General by Congress—Correspondence—Taylor's Views of future Operations—Camargo taken—Despatches.

THE President of the United States announced to Congress, on the 11th of May, 1846, that hostilities had been actually commenced by Mexico. Two days afterwards, an act was passed by Congress, the preamble of which declared a state of war to exist, "by the act of the republic of Mexico," and the first section of which appropriated ten millions of dollars, and empowered the President to accept the services of fifty thousand volunteers, for the army. The action of Congress in thus voting men and money was prompt and unanimous, although the assertion quoted from the preamble, that the war was the act of Mexico, met with earnest opposition. Authorized by Congress, the President immediately issued a proclamation invoking the nation to sustain the measures necessary to secure a peace.

General Taylor, who, when the enemy yet untired in battle was in full force, had been embarrassed for the want of troops sufficient to ensure the safety of two posts, now began to find himself, when no enemy was near, equally embarrassed by the prospect of reinforcements too numerous for any operation which he then had in view. His call upon the governor of Louisiana for four regiments had met an instant and patriotic response—and other states, as well as this, were anxious to recruit for the service. The predicament menaced by this over-

flow of men, unaccompanied with the means of subsistence or transportation, is partially set forth in a despatch dated the 20th of May, addressed to the Adjutant General, in which he remarks :

“ On the 26th of April, I had occasion to advise the Department that hostilities had actually broken out, and that, in consequence, I had found it necessary to use the authority with which I was vested, and call upon the governors of Louisiana and Texas for a force, each, of four regiments. The eight regiments thus called for would make a force of nearly five thousand men, which I deemed sufficient to meet the wants of the service in this quarter. At the same time that I wrote to the governor of Louisiana requesting this volunteer force, I addressed a letter to General Gaines, desiring him to assist in organizing these regiments, and having them promptly supplied. In my communication to the governor, the organization was very exactly prescribed, being that indicated from your office on the 25th of August, 1845. I find, however, that the organization has been exceeded, and, moreover, that General Gaines has called for many more volunteers than I deemed necessary, extending the call to other states besides Louisiana.

It will, of course, be for the government to decide whether the future operations in this quarter will require the amount of force (entirely unknown) which is coming hither. I only desire to say, that this reinforcement, beyond the eight regiments mentioned above, was never asked for by me, and that in making the call of the 26th of April, I well knew that if the Mexicans fought us at all, it would be before the arrival of the volunteers. It was for the purpose of clearing the river, and performing such further service as the government might direct, that I thought it proper to ask for reinforcements. It is extremely doubtful whether the foot regiments from Texas can be raised, and I shall desire the Governor, who is expected here, to suspend the call for them. None of the mounted companies, except Captain Price's, already in service, have reported to me.

I fear that the volunteers have exhausted the supply of tents



deposited in New Orleans for the use of this army. We are greatly in want of them; and I must request that immediate measures be taken to send direct to Brazos Santiago, say one thousand tents, for the use of the army in the field. The tents of the 7th infantry were cut up to make sand-bags during the recent bombardment of Fort Brown."

His position was further explained in a letter dated the 21st of May, in which he remarks:

"Our future movements must depend, in a great degree, on the extent to which the Rio Grande is navigable for steamboats, and I fear that my expectations in this particular will not be realized. Though at times navigable as high as Camargo, or even Mier, it is doubtful whether a boat can now be pushed higher than Reynosa. Indeed, the 'Neva,' which is in the river, and accompanied the expedition under General Smith, has not yet reached this place, though hourly expected. Could we establish and keep up by water a depot at Camargo, operations might be carried on in the valley of the San Juan toward Monterey, the first city of importance in that direction. A direct movement from this point to Monterey would require vast transportation, chiefly by pack-mules, and would, moreover, be hazardous in summer, on account of the scarcity of water, part of the route being supplied by wells only. The country between this and Monterey, by whatever route, cannot support an army.

"I shall lose no time in ascertaining the practicability of the river for steamboats, and shall occupy Reynosa, and such other points as a boat may be able to reach."

We find that General Taylor continued to represent to the Department the inadequacy of his means to transport troops up the river, and to take a candid exception to the number of them unexpectedly pressed upon him. His military character demands that his frequent expositions of the embarrassments produced by these circumstances should be set forth in his own language. He addressed the Department as follows on the 3d of June:

"I respectfully enclose herewith a field return of the forces

in and near Matamoros, both regular and volunteer. The corps known to have arrived at Point Isabel, of which no returns have yet been received, will carry the entire force under my orders to nearly eight thousand men.

“I am necessarily detained at this point for want of suitable transportation to carry on offensive operations. There is not a steamboat at my command proper for the navigation of the Rio Grande; and without water transportation, I consider it useless to attempt any extensive movement. Measures have been taken to procure boats of suitable draught and description, and one or two may now be expected. In the mean time, I propose to push a battalion of infantry as far as Reynosa, and occupy that town. For any operations in the direction of Monterey, it will be necessary to establish a large depot at Camargo, which I shall lose no time in doing as soon as proper transports arrive, unless I receive counter-instructions from the Department.

“I trust the Department will see that I could not possibly have anticipated the arrival of such heavy reinforcements from Louisiana as are now here, and on their way hither. Without large means of transportation, this force will embarrass, rather than facilitate our operations. I cannot doubt that the Department has already given instructions, based upon the change in our position since my first call for volunteers.

“Our last accounts of Arista represent his force to be halted at Coma, an extensive hacienda on the Monterey road, about one hundred miles from this point. He has pickets covering the roads leading to Matamoros, with a view to cut off all communication with the interior. The Departmental authorities have issued a decree denouncing as traitors all who hold intercourse with us, or with those who do so. I am, nevertheless, disposed to believe that in some quarters, at least, our presence is not unfavourably viewed. We have no intelligence from the city of Mexico.

“Ordnance stores, and other munitions of war, are continually discovered in the town. Five pieces of cannon, and a very

large amount of balls, shells, and ammunition generally, have been brought to light."

The uncertainty of Taylor's future movements, and the mode of prosecuting the war, generally seem to have been shared by the Department at home. This is shown in a letter, dated the 8th of June, from the Secretary of War to General Taylor, of which the following is part:

"In my letter of the 28th ultimo, you were left to your own discretion and judgment as to the measures to be pursued before the end of the unfavourable season shall be passed, and it is not now intended to control that discretion. You best know what amount of force you will have under your command, and what can be best accomplished with that force.

"It is presumed you will hold both banks of the Rio Grande to a considerable distance from its mouth, and secure the uninterrupted use of that river for the transportation of supplies. I hope you will be able to take and hold in possession all places on it as high up as Laredo.

"It is proper that I should advise you that a considerable force, which will be also under your command, will soon assemble at San Antonio de Bexar. The ultimate destination of this force is Chihuahua, if it should be determined that such an expedition would have a favourable operation in the conduct of the war; but it might be at once used to take and secure the several places on the Rio Grande. Though we have no despatch from you since those giving an account of the battles on the 8th and 9th of May, we have such information as induces the belief that you are in possession of Matamoros, and that you are not now threatened with any considerable Mexican force. It is desirable that you should find yourself in sufficient strength to capture and hold Monterey with your present force. You are apprised that large reinforcements are preparing to join you. Besides the regular forces now under your command, and which will be speedily augmented, you will soon have nearly twenty thousand volunteers, (including those to rendezvous at San Antonio de Bexar,) who are to serve for one year. Your determination as to immediate movements



will, therefore, be somewhat influenced by the consideration of the additional force which will soon join you.

“The President is desirous of receiving, and hopes soon to be favoured with, your views and suggestions in relation to the fall campaign. His determination is to have the war prosecuted with vigour, and to embrace in the objects to be compassed in that campaign, such as will dispose the enemy to desire an end of the war. Shall the campaign be conducted with the view of striking at the city of Mexico; or confined, so far as regards the forces under your immediate command, to the northern provinces of Mexico? Your views on this point will, doubtless, have an important influence upon the determination of the Government here. Should our army penetrate far into the interior of Mexico, how are supplies to be obtained? Can they be, to any considerable extent, drawn from the enemy’s country, or must they be obtained from the United States? If the latter, what are the facilities and difficulties of transportation? These are very important questions, and the answers to them will have an essential bearing in settling the plan and objects of the campaign; and it is desired that you should express your views fully in regard to them.

“Again: it is important to know your opinion of the description of troops best adapted to operations in the interior of Mexico; what proportion should be infantry, artillery, and cavalry, &c. A peace must be conquered in the shortest space of time practicable. Your views of the manner of doing it are requested. It is not doubted that you will push your advantages to the utmost extent it can be done, with the means at your command.”

Before the receipt of this letter Taylor continued to have constant accessions to his force, increasing it to an unwieldy bulk for the plans which he contemplated. For this he was not responsible. His requisition for troops had been explicit; eight regiments, and no more, were called for. At the same time he had urged the supply of all the materials of an invading army. But while he was flooded with men, he was kept comparatively inactive for the want of supplies commensurate

with his main undertaking. His own correspondence satisfactorily proves that the means at his disposal were inadequate to purposes which he was expected to accomplish. Two letters may be cited as further examples. Addressing the Adjutant General of the Army on the 10th of June, he said :

“I beg leave earnestly to invite the attention of the Department to the following points :

“First. The great influx of volunteers at Point Isabel. Five regiments certainly from Louisiana, numbering, say 3600 men ; two regiments or battalions from Louisville and St. Louis, numbering, say 1200 more ; several companies from Alabama, and I know not how many from Texas ; the latter now beginning to arrive. The volunteer troops, now under my orders, amount to nearly 6000 men. How far they may be increased without previous notification to me, it is impossible to tell.

“Secondly. The entire want of the proper kind of transportation to push my operations up the river. The boats on which I depended for this service were found to be nearly destroyed by worms, and entirely unfit for the navigation of the river. At my instance, Major Thomas, on the 18th of May, required from Lieut. Col. Hunt a boat of the proper description, and followed it up in a few days by a requisition for another. At the last dates from New Orleans no boat had been procured. Captain Sanders, of the engineers, was despatched by me to New Orleans, to assist in procuring suitable boats, but I have yet received no report from him.

“As I have previously reported, my operations are completely paralyzed by the want of suitable steamboats to navigate the Rio Grande. Since the 18th of May, the army has lain in camp near this place continually receiving heavy reinforcements of men, but no facility for water transport, without which additional numbers are but an embarrassment.

“I desire to place myself right in this matter, and to let the Department see that the inactivity of the army results from no neglect of mine. I must express my astonishment that such large reinforcements have been sent forward to join the army,

without being accompanied by the means of transportation, both by land and water, to render them efficient. As matters now stand, whatever may be the expectations of the Department, I cannot move from this place; and unless Captain Sanders shall succeed in procuring boats of the proper kind, I can give no assurance in regard to future operations."

This language is sufficiently explicit and emphatic, exhibiting General Taylor's determination not to be held responsible for the delays in the movements of the army. Again, on the 17th of June, he wrote to the Adjutant General, and after remarking that he had received no advices since the 10th, says:

"No steamboats have been sent out from New Orleans for the navigation of the Rio Grande, and in the absence of all information on that point, or respecting the views of the government, I am altogether in the dark as to our future operations. I must think that orders have been given, by superior authority, to suspend the forwarding of means of transportation from New Orleans. I cannot otherwise account for the extraordinary delay shown by the Quartermaster's Department in that city. Even the mails, containing probably important despatches from the government, are not expedited.

"Lieutenant Colonel Wilson has occupied Reynosa without opposition. What remains of the Mexican army is understood to be still at Linares, and has suffered from disease. General Torrejon has died, and Colonel Carasco, at last advices, was very ill. I learn that Generals Arista and Ampudia have gone to Mexico, probably for the trial of the former, or both.

"Volunteer regiments have arrived from Louisville and St. Louis, making, with those from Louisiana, eight strong and organized battalions—mustering over 5000 men.

"In addition, we have seven companies of Alabama volunteers, and twelve or fifteen companies from Texas. Others from Texas are continually arriving. A portion of these volunteers has been lying in camp at this place for nearly a month, completely paralyzed by the want of transportation. Exposed



as they are in this climate to diseases of the camp, and without any prospect, so far as I can see, of being usefully employed, I must recommend that they be allowed to return to their homes.

“I have despatched Captain McCulloch, a good partisan officer, in the direction of Linares, with his company, to gain information touching the numbers and position of the enemy, and the resources of the country.”

It is proper to remark, with regard to the expression in the letter of the 10th of June, touching the increase of the volunteer force without notification to General Taylor, that notification had been forwarded by the Department of all the volunteers called out by its order. The excess was under the order of General Gaines. On the 12th of June, General Scott had written to General Taylor:

“Recruits to fill up the ranks of the regular companies which are with you, or ordered to join you, to (say) about seventy men each, shall be sent forward as fast as practicable, so as to give you, we hope, in a short time, a total force of about 23,070 men.

“Without waiting for the arrival of that amount of force, but before, and as soon as you shall deem it safe in respect to the relative numbers and positions of the enemy, your knowledge of the country, your supplies and means of transportation, it is the wish and expectation of the President that, with your accustomed energy, you take up lines of march beyond the Rio Grande, and press your operations towards the heart of the enemy's country; that is, upon such important points as you may deem necessary to conquer and to hold.”

It has been sufficiently shown, that the latitude thus allowed General Taylor in his operations, was a negative privilege. He was tied down by circumstances, which his own forecast had in vain attempted to obviate, to the spot from which he had driven the enemy.

The splendid success of General Taylor and his army, was

learned with admiration and pride in every part of the United States. The fears for his safety, which, when he was supposed to be cut off from Point Isabel by Arista's army, were, in the beginning of May, wrought up to intensity, gave way to universal rejoicing and confidence, when the victories were reported, which have made the 8th and 9th of that month forever glorious in the history of the national arms. Men of all parties, those who opposed the war as well as those who sustained it, united in awarding honour to the commander, who, undaunted by the number or position of his enemies, had moved irresistibly through their midst, fulfilling his plans as promptly and surely as though no obstacle, no danger, had been interposed to defeat them. In every city, meetings were held to express the exultation of the people at home, who sympathized with his triumphs in the distant scene of his trials and labours.

On the 30th day of May, the President wrote to General Taylor in the following terms, transmitting a commission as Brevet Major General.

Washington City, May 30, 1846.

SIR: I transmit to you herewith a commission as Major General by brevet in the army of the United States, conferred upon you for gallant conduct and distinguished services in the successive victories over superior Mexican forces at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, on the 8th and 9th days of May, 1846.

It gave me sincere pleasure, immediately upon the receipt of official intelligence from the scene of your achievements, to confer upon you, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, this testimonial of the estimate which your government places upon your skill and gallantry. To yourself and the brave officers and soldiers under your command the gratitude of the country is justly due. Our army have fully sustained their deservedly high reputation, and added another bright page to the history of American valour and patriotism. They

have won new laurels for themselves and for their country. My confidence in them never faltered. The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma rank among our most brilliant victories, and will long be remembered by the American people. When all the details of these battles, and of the noble defence of the camp opposite to Matamoros, shall have been received, it will be my pleasure, as it will be my grateful duty, to render to the officers and men under your command suitable testimonials for their conduct in the brilliant victories which a superintending Providence has enabled them to achieve for their country.

In transmitting to you this commission, and in communicating to the officers and soldiers under your command my profound sense of their meritorious services, I but respond to the patriotic enthusiasm manifested by the people in behalf of their brave defenders. Whilst my warmest thanks are tendered to the survivors, the nation mourns the loss of the brave officers and soldiers who fell in defence of their country upon the field of victory. Their names also shall be remembered, and appropriate honours be paid to their memory by a grateful country.

You will cause this communication to be made known to the army under your command.

JAMES K. POLK.

To Brevet Major Gen. Z. Taylor,  
Commanding U. S. army on the Rio Grande.

The Legislature of Louisiana passed a resolution of thanks, and voted General Taylor a sword. A committee was appointed to wait upon him and tender him the compliment. The committee arrived at his quarters on the 8th of June, and the chairman, having been introduced to the General and his staff, made a brief address, to which the General replied, with much emotion, in these terms:

“My heart feels too deeply and sensibly the high honour that has been conferred on me, my officers and men, to respond to your expressions of gratitude and thanks. I always felt assured that the patriotic state of Louisiana would be among the



first to rush to the assistance of our little army in time of need. I well knew, as did also my officers and men, that chivalry and noble daring were her attributes. Her volunteers have readily abandoned their homes and business to assist us in the hour of danger. We feel a deep debt of gratitude to them and to you. The generous and timely action of the Legislature of Louisiana will not be forgotten by us. We feel that we have only done our duty; yet we cannot but feel gratified to have gained the approbation of our fellow-citizens. Together with the love of country, which is common to us all, it is that approbation which cheers and animates the soldier in the hour of battle. Gentlemen—I am unaccustomed to public speaking. I therefore, in the name of my officers and men, thank you, and the patriotic state which you represent, for the honour conferred on us.”

This is but a single example of popular feeling for Taylor and his army. The limits of a volume would not embrace the formal expressions of it, during the few days after the intelligence of his victories had spread through the country.

Congress resolved to place Taylor at once in the highest rank of the service, and he was accordingly, by act of that body, promoted to be a full Major General. This advancement was communicated in a letter from the Secretary of War, of which the following are extracts.

“ War Department,  
“ Washington, July 1, 1846.

“ SIR: It gives me pleasure to transmit herewith a commission, issued to you by the President, of Major General in the army of the United States, pursuant to the first section of the act of Congress, passed 18th June last, a copy of which is also herewith enclosed.

“ On receiving your despatch No. 51, stating your want of means for transporting troops, supplies, &c., on the Rio Grande, I desired the quartermaster general to inform me what measures had been taken on that subject. I herewith send you his reply. I trust that the steps taken by your orders, and those of the quartermaster general here, will have furnished the

means to enable you to prosecute active operations, as suggested in my letters of the 28th of May and 8th of June.

“I anticipated the embarrassments of which you complain, by the accumulation of troops before accommodations could be possibly provided, and arrangements made for the employment of them. The only relief which can be applied to the case, is that contained in my previous communications to you on the subject, and in that from the adjutant general on the 25th of May.”

The narrative of General Taylor's operations and policy on the Rio Grande, in the commencement of the war, is continued by the insertion of the subjoined full, and very able letter, to the Secretary of War. The letter of the Secretary, dated the 28th of May, to which reference is made, has been given, in part, on a preceding page.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Matamoras, July 2, 1846.

SIR: In reply to the communications of the Secretary of War, dated May 28th, and June 8th, and to that of the general-in-chief, dated June 12th, I have the honour to submit the following views in regard to the operations against Mexico from this quarter. I will remark that my constant efforts to procure information in relation to the nature of the country, amount of supplies, &c., have not been as satisfactory as I could wish, the various accounts often differing even in important particulars. Either from the ignorance or interested motives of those who profess to give information, it is extremely difficult to obtain any upon which we can implicitly rely.

In calling upon the States of Louisiana and Texas for an auxiliary force of about 5000 men, it was my expectation with that force to be able to clear the course of the Rio Grande as high as Laredo, and to occupy or control the country to the foot of the mountains, capturing and holding Monterey, if circumstances permitted. With the proper river transportation this could have been easily done, a depot would now have

been established at Camargo, and our operations pushed up the valley of the San Juan. The difficulties and embarrassments that I have experienced for want of such transportation have already been sufficiently made known. These difficulties have been increased by the great excess of volunteers that have been sent out—say 3000 men beyond the original call. I nevertheless propose, upon the arrival of the steamers now hourly expected, to throw forward this force, with the regular troops to Camargo, and establish there a depot and base from which to operate towards the mountains. My reasons for retaining these six-months' volunteers in service have been set forth in another communication; and I desire, from motives of health and other considerations, to keep them employed as actively as possible. The twelve-months' volunteers can, in the mean time, form camps at healthy points in my rear; and, while receiving instruction, await the season for more extensive operations. The above dispositions can be made in the rainy season perhaps better than at any other time, as the river is then in a good navigable state. For operating with a heavy force—say 6000 men from this point—towards Monterey and Saltillo, through which passes the only artillery route across the mountains, it is indispensable to employ the river as a channel of supply, and the valley of the San Juan, on one of the heads of which Monterey is situated, as a line of operations. The direct land route from this point to Monterey is much longer than the line from Camargo; in wet weather impassable for artillery or heavy wagons, and in dry scantily supplied with water. Assuming, then, Camargo as the depot, and the valley of the San Juan as the line of operations, the question arises, what amount of supplies can be obtained, and how can a column be subsisted on this route? It is pretty well determined that we cannot depend upon any considerable supply of breadstuffs short of Monterey, or perhaps Saltillo, seventy-five miles further south. Beef in abundance, it is believed, may be procured, and on this, with perhaps occasional issues of mutton, we must mainly depend for the meat part of the ration.



From Camargo to Saltillo, then, we must expect to depend upon our depot for bread ; and I am of opinion, from all I can learn of the resources of the country in pack mules and means of transportation generally, that a column exceeding six thousand men cannot be maintained in bread alone as far as Saltillo. Saltillo itself is at no great distance from two or three fertile grain-growing districts, but how far the production in those districts may exceed the supply I cannot with any certainty determine.

The above calculations, in regard to subsistence, are made on the suppositions that we shall find the people of the country, if not friends, at least passive and willing to part with their produce to the best advantages. I believe we shall find such to be their temper on this side of the mountains ; whether this neutrality or indifference extends beyond, may well be a question. Should they prove hostile, destroy their crops, and drive away their stock, it will be an extremely difficult matter to sustain a column at Saltillo—still more so to pass beyond that city.

Supposing a column of the above strength—say 6000 men—able to maintain itself at Saltillo, it will become a question, depending for its solution upon the elements above indicated, how far that force may be increased, or what amount of the twelve-months' volunteers may be safely and profitably thrown forward from the rear, with a view to future operations.

From Camargo to the city of Mexico is a line little, if any, short of 1000 miles in length. The resources of the country are, to say the best, not superabundant ; and, over long spaces of the route, are known to be deficient. Although the road, as we advance south, approaches both seas, yet the topography of the country, and the consequent character of the communications, forbids the taking up a new line of supply, either from Tampico or the Pacific coast. Except in the case (deemed improbable) of entire acquiescence, if not support, on the part of the Mexican people, I consider it impracticable to keep open so long a line of communication. It is, therefore, my opinion that our operations from this frontier should not look to the city of Mexico, but should be confined to cutting off the

northern provinces—an undertaking of comparative facility and assurance of success.

With a view of cutting off the northern provinces, the projected expedition from San Antonio to Chihuahua may be of great importance. From the best information, however, which I now possess, I would suggest mounted troops alone for that expedition. I am satisfied that the route from that point to Chihuahua is not practicable for artillery or wagons, and infantry would rather embarrass the movement of a mounted expedition.

Mountain howitzers, to be packed with their carriages on mules, might be advantageously employed on that service, and indeed with the column designed to penetrate to Saltillo. There may be great difficulty in supplying any considerable force between San Antonio and Chihuahua, although the line is not very long, probably not exceeding 300 miles. I hope to procure better information than any I now possess in regard to this route.

It will be perceived that my remarks on the line of operations from the Rio Grande, southward, have been confined to the question of subsistence, which is certainly the most important one to be considered. There are military obstacles on the route, particularly in the space between Monterey and Saltillo, where the defile of "La Rinconada" is represented to be of great strength. This point, and perhaps others, if fortified, may give us some trouble; but if they can be turned by light troops, and such I believe to be the case, they will not long impede our march.

In regard to the "description of troops best adapted to operations in the interior of Mexico," I am scarcely prepared at this time to give a definite reply. The facility or difficulty of obtaining forage must necessarily control to some extent the amount of cavalry employed. At the estate of the Conde de Jarral, some forty leagues from Saltillo, there will, I understand, be no difficulty in obtaining a remount when necessary, and forage for the cavalry. The field artillery under my orders (four batteries, including Washington's) will, particularly if

filled up to the complement of guns, be quite sufficient for any operations in this quarter. We may have occasion for heavier guns, and I have directed two twelve-pounder field-guns to be procured, which, with the twenty-four-pounder howitzers now in depot at Point Isabel, will constitute an efficient battery. We shall have two, perhaps three regiments of horse from Texas under my original call. They are now organizing under the Governor's directions at Point Isabel. These are six months' men. Should I find it necessary to increase the cavalry force, I can draw certainly one regiment from San Antonio, and still leave quite enough for the expedition to Chihuahua.

I have given my views on most of the points connected with the operations from this frontier, purposely abstaining from any reference to movements against Tampico or Vera Cruz. The former place, I am induced to believe, could have been easily taken a month since, and could be so even now; but the yellow fever would not have permitted us to hold it, and I deemed it best to undertake no movement in that direction at this season of the year. Should we advance as far as San Luis Potosi, which has a communication (though not for wheels) with Tampico, the possession of the latter place would be important.

I am awaiting with utmost impatience the arrival of steam-boats suited to the navigation of this river, to establish a depot at Camargo, and throw the troops gradually forward to that point. The rainy season has commenced, and the river is now in the best possible condition for navigation. Several small boats were to leave New Orleans about the 20th of June. If not wrecked in the recent severe gales, they may be hourly expected here.

I have the honour to be, respectfully, general, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Brevet Brig. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.



While General Taylor awaited at Matamoros the arrival of boats, necessary for the advance of the main body of his army, he had sent detachments to take possession of the accessible towns on the Rio Grande. Early in June, Lieutenant Colonel Wilson had taken peaceable possession of Reynosa. On the 14th of July, two companies of the Seventh Infantry, under Captain Miles, took possession of Camargo without opposition. Mier and Revilla were also successively occupied by other detachments. In a despatch mentioning these operations, dated the 22d, General Taylor adds:

“ Captain Miles, the day after he had taken possession of Camargo, was joined by the remainder of the regiment, two pieces of artillery, and a company of irregular cavalry. He has since been reinforced by the 5th infantry; and the 1st brigade of infantry, under General Worth, is now en route to Camargo, except a guard of two companies, left to escort the train by land—the main body proceeding by water. The 3d brigade will immediately follow, and in a few days all the active regular force will be at Camargo, or in motion thither. I am unavoidably compelled, much to my regret, to leave several companies of the artillery regiments to guard the different depots in my rear.

“ We have now several steamboats in the river, and the business of sending up troops and supplies is urged as much as possible. I find the difficulty of throwing supplies up the river to be very great, in consequence of the rapidity of the current and the entire absence of dry steamboat fuel. But every effort will be employed to overcome these difficulties, and I have no doubt that we shall be able to keep up a depot at Camargo, quite sufficient for any operations from that point.

“ As yet the land route to Camargo is impassable for wagons, owing to the recent rains and freshets. As soon as it shall become practicable, the field artillery and train of the army will move forward to Camargo.

“ As soon as I can complete the necessary arrangements for throwing forward the volunteer troops to Camargo, I propose

to establish my head-quarters at that point, and organize, without delay, a marching column to move on Monterey."

Before proceeding in the narrative of General Taylor's operations, a glance at the civil condition of Mexico, and at the purposes and measures of the United States government in the prosecution of the war, will aid an understanding of the circumstances affecting his progress. His own views of the mode of bringing the war to a successful issue, have already been partially developed in his correspondence. Other letters remain to be cited which will further illustrate his opinions on the general subject. These several matters will be embraced in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER XI.

Civil Dissensions of the Mexicans—Tyranny of Paredes—Popular Defections—Conspirators apprehended—Liberty of the Press abolished—Unwise Policy of Paredes—News of Arista's Defeat received—Sensation in the Capital—Money refused by the Clergy—Decline of Paredes' authority—Movement in favour of Santa Anna—Civil War in Mexico—Blockade by the United States of Mexican Ports—Plans of the United States Government—Plans of General Taylor—Proclamation to the People of Mexico—Confidential Letter to Taylor—Taylor's Answer—Santa Anna proclaimed in Vera Cruz—Excitement in the Capital—Fall of Paredes—Santa Anna's return to Mexico—Government of de Salas—Santa Anna's triumphal entry into the Capital—His pledges to the Mexicans—Taylor's Arrangements complete for his Advance—His Difficulties explained—Enumeration of his Force—March of Worth's Division—Of Butler's and Twiggs' Divisions—Report of Forces against Monterey—Sufferings and Death of Volunteers—March of Worth's Division towards Monterey.

At the moment that the government and people of Mexico, regarding the annexation of Texas to the United States as an aggressive act, should have smothered civil dissension, and united firmly in the single purpose of settling amicably their disputes with so powerful a neighbour, or of carrying on war with all their energies, that unfortunate country presented its wonted scenes of mal-administration on the one hand, and rebellion on the other. Within the same week that Texas had been admitted into the Union by act of Congress, a revolution,

the joint project of the army and the church, had placed Paredes in the executive chair of Mexico. Adverse, as we have seen, to the conciliatory policy of Herrera, whom he had superseded, the new President signalized his accession to power by refusing to receive an American diplomatic agent, and by declaring war to exist between the two nations, as soon as General Taylor had crossed the Nueces. This course, regarding a foreign government, imposing on Paredes the manifest duty of winning the affections and support of all parties, was, on the contrary, attended by measures odious to a large portion of his countrymen, and incompatible with their hearty support of his administration. The letter, as well as the spirit, of the constitutions acknowledged by his predecessors was changed ; and even the affectation of regard for popular rights, which had been maintained by some of them, was by him discarded, and he assumed an authority nearly allied to absolutism. By an executive decree, the elective franchise was taken from the mass of the people and confided to a small and privileged class. Yucatan, wearied with the oppressions of former administrations, had already refused her aid in placing Vera Cruz in a condition of defence ; and the intelligent and independent citizens of that city, in turn resisted the decree, which abrogated their free choice of representatives to the national congress. Organized discontent appeared also in other departments, and the means of an expedition, destined to defend the Californias against the United States, were appropriated by a revolted garrison to a scheme of overthrowing the home government. Other military bodies imitated this example, and factious or ambitious chiefs fomented popular ill-will, until their party became extended and formidable. The discovery of a correspondence among them, implicated many citizens of the capital, who were accordingly seized and imprisoned. On the day that these things passed in the interior and the city of Mexico, Taylor hoisted the American flag on Fort Paredes.

Instead of assuaging the ill-will, manifestly so general, the next step of Paredes was to trample on the press. The editors of the journals which exposed his tyrannous acts were arrested,



and with summary disregard of law, banished or confined in the common jails. This new measure of despotism had just been effected, when the intelligence of Arista's defeats, and the surrender of Matamoros, reached the capital. Paredes was mortified, the citizens enraged. "Death to the Americans!" echoed from street to street, and from city to city. But with this sentiment in their hearts, civil discord still occupied the time of factions daily growing more powerful. The dictator, who felt the responsibility of having declared war with the United States, found himself not only embarrassed by the defection of whole provinces, but unable to prosecute his foreign policy for want of revenue. While his energies were in one direction devoted to quelling the insurgents, his ingenuity was taxed in another to supply an empty treasury. He resolved on an appeal to the clergy, who had been instrumental in placing him in power, and who had sanctioned his war measures on the ground that the United States aimed at the subversion of the national religion. This appeal was duly considered, and the ecclesiastical council arrived at the conclusion, that the church fund could not be diverted from its special uses.

The authority attained by Paredes in January, he saw rapidly departing from him in June. Already the revolutionary party had acquired sufficient strength to overthrow a local government, to issue a formal protest against the central power, and to declare the basis of a new order of things. A provisional government asserted its existence, and Santa Anna, then an exile in Cuba, was presented as the patriotic head of it. The congress of Paredes assembled, and his opening address to that body set forth the evils under which the country suffered—civil contention, a foreign war, an exhausted treasury. There was deliberation, but no action equal to the emergency. The troops of Paredes, and of the revolutionists, were in the field against each other, fighting for the supremacy, while two companies of United States Infantry marched into Camargo, without an arm to oppose them. Paredes enjoyed a temporary success, but his power daily melted away before the ardent opposition of Santa Anna's partisans. They were firmly estab-

lished in the southern and western provinces. Paredes still held the capital. Such was the relative position of Mexican parties in the beginning of July, 1846.

On the same day that General Taylor took possession of Matamoras, an American squadron anchored off Vera Cruz, and the blockade of that, and other ports of Mexico on the Gulf, commenced. The blockade of the Pacific coast was also ordered. The operations on land, contemplated by the government of the United States, embraced three distinct invasions of Mexico. The progress of the main army under Taylor will be presently shown. The second division, commanded by General Wool, was directed against Chihuahua; and the third, under Col. Kearney, against Santa Fe, in New Mexico. Between the two latter divisions and General Taylor, there was no concert, and their movements, therefore, do not enter into this narrative.

During the month of July, General Taylor continued to discipline his new troops, and to make preparations for the advance of his main body up the Rio Grande, and ultimately in the direction of San Luis Potosi—distant about three hundred miles from Matamoras—by way of Saltillo and Monterey. Camargo, already occupied by a division under General Worth, was destined to be his head-quarters, from which the column marching on Monterey would be organized. General Taylor had meanwhile received from his government the annexed form of a proclamation to the Mexican people, designed to facilitate his advance, and to accomplish the objects of the war.

A PROCLAMATION by the General commanding the Army of the United States of America.

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO :—

After many years of patient endurance, the United States are at length constrained to acknowledge that a war now exists between our government and the government of Mexico. For many years our citizens have been subjected to repeated insults and injuries, our vessels and cargoes have been seized

and confiscated, our merchants have been plundered, maimed, imprisoned, without cause and without reparation. At length your government acknowledged the justice of our claims, and agreed by treaty to make satisfaction by payment of several millions of dollars ; but this treaty has been violated by your rulers, and the stipulated payments have been withheld. Our late effort to terminate all difficulties by peaceful negotiation has been rejected by the dictator Paredes, and our minister of peace, whom your rulers had agreed to receive, has been refused a hearing. He has been treated with indignity and insult, and Paredes has announced that war exists between us. This war, thus first proclaimed by him, has been acknowledged as an existing fact by our President and Congress with perfect unanimity, and will be prosecuted with vigour and energy against your army and rulers ; but those of the Mexican people who remain neutral will not be molested.

Your government is in the hands of tyrants and usurpers. They have abolished your state governments, they have overthrown your federal constitution, they have deprived you of the right of suffrage, destroyed the liberty of the press, despoiled you of your arms, and reduced you to a state of absolute dependence upon the power of a military dictator. Your army and rulers extort from the people by grievous taxation, by forced loans, and military seizures, the very money which sustains the usurpers in power. Being disarmed, you were left defenceless, an easy prey to the savage Camanches, who not only destroy your lives and property, but drive into a captivity more horrible than death itself, your wives and children. It is your military rulers who have reduced you to this deplorable condition. It is these tyrants, and their corrupt and cruel satellites, gorged with the people's treasure, by whom you are thus oppressed and impoverished, some of whom have boldly advocated a monarchical government, and would place a European prince upon the throne of Mexico. We come to obtain reparation for repeated wrongs and injuries ; we come to obtain indemnity for the past, and security for the future ; we come to overthrow the tyrants who have destroyed your liberties ; but we come



to make no war upon the people of Mexico, nor upon any form of free government they may choose to select for themselves. It is our wish to see you liberated from despots, to drive back the savage Camanches, to prevent the renewal of their assaults, and to compel them to restore to you from captivity your long-lost wives and children. Your religion, your altars, and churches, the property of your churches and citizens, the emblems of your faith, and its ministers, shall be protected, and remain inviolate. Hundreds of our army, and hundreds of thousands of our people, are members of the Catholic church. In every state, and in nearly every city and village of our Union, Catholic churches exist, and the priests perform their holy functions in peace and security under the sacred guarantee of our Constitution. We come among the people of Mexico as friends and republican brethren, and all who receive us as such shall be protected, whilst all who are seduced into the army of your dictator shall be treated as enemies. We shall want from you nothing but food for our army, and for this you shall always be paid in cash the full value. It is the settled policy of your tyrants to deceive you in regard to the policy and character of our government and people. These tyrants fear the example of our free institutions, and constantly endeavour to misrepresent our purposes, and inspire you with hatred for your republican brethren of the American Union.—Give us but the opportunity to undeceive you, and you will soon learn that all the representations of Paredes were false, and were only made to induce you to consent to the establishment of a despotic government.

In your struggle for liberty with the Spanish monarchy, thousands of our countrymen risked their lives and shed their blood in your defence. Our own commodore, the gallant Porter, maintained in triumph your flag upon the ocean, and our government was the first to acknowledge your independence. With pride and pleasure we enrolled your name on the list of independent republics, and sincerely desired that you might, in peace and prosperity, enjoy all the blessings of free government. Success on the part of your tyrants against

the army of the Union is impossible; but, if they could succeed, it would only be to enable them to fill your towns with soldiers, eating out your substance, and harassing you with still more grievous taxation. Already they have abolished the liberty of the press, as the first step towards the introduction of that monarchy, which it is their real purpose to proclaim and establish.

Mexicans! we must treat as enemies, and overthrow the tyrants, who, whilst they have wronged and insulted us, have deprived you of your liberty; but the Mexican people who remain neutral during the contest, shall be protected against their military despots by the republican army of the Union."

The War Department, advised by the President, followed this document with the subjoined confidential letter, which, with General Taylor's answer, forms an interesting link in the chain, both of his instructions and views touching the conduct of the war generally, and of that branch of operations with which he had been entrusted.

*Secretary of War to General Taylor.*

War Department,  
Washington, July 9, 1846.

SIR:—The proclamation which you were directed to spread among the Mexican people will have put you in possession of the views of the government in relation to the mode of carrying on the war, and also in relation to the manner of treating the inhabitants. The war is only carried on to obtain justice; and the sooner that can be obtained, and with the least expenditure of blood and money, the better. One of the evils of war is the interruption of diplomatic communications between the respective authorities, and the consequent ignorance under which each party may lie in relation to the views of the other. The natural substitute of these interrupted diplomatic communications is the military intercourse which the usages of war allow between contending armies in the field, and in which commanding generals can do much towards reopening negotiations, and smoothing the way to a return of peace.

The President has seen with much approbation the civility and kindness with which you have treated your prisoners, and all the inhabitants with whom you have come in contact. He wishes that course of conduct continued, and all opportunities taken to conciliate the inhabitants, and let them see that peace is within their reach the moment their rulers will consent to do us justice. The inhabitants should be encouraged to remain in their towns and villages, and these sentiments be carefully made known to them. The same things may be said to officers made prisoners, or who may visit your head-quarters according to the usages of war; and it is the wish of the President that such visits be encouraged, and also that you take occasions to send officers to the head-quarters of the enemy for the military purposes, real or ostensible, which are of ordinary occurrence between armies, and in which opportunity may be taken to speak of the war itself as only carried on to obtain justice, and that we had much rather procure that by negotiation than by fighting. Of course, authority to speak for your government will be disavowed, but a knowledge of its wishes will be averred, and a readiness will be expressed to communicate to your government the wishes of the Mexican government to negotiate for honourable peace, whenever such shall be their wish, and with the assurance that such overtures will be met in a corresponding spirit by your government. A discreet officer, who understands Spanish, and who can be employed in the intercourse so usual between armies, can be your confidential agent on such occasions, and can mask his real, under his ostensible, object of a military interview.

You will also readily comprehend that, in a country so divided into races, classes, and parties, as Mexico is, and with so many local divisions among departments, and personal divisions among individuals, there must be great room for operating on the minds and feelings of large portions of the inhabitants, and inducing them to wish success to an invasion which has no desire to injure their country, and which, in overthrowing their oppressors, may benefit themselves. Between the Spaniards, who monopolize the wealth and power of the



country, and the mixed Indian race who bear its burdens, there must be jealousy and animosity. The same feelings must exist between the lower and the higher orders of the clergy, the latter of whom have the dignities and the revenues, while the former have poverty and labour. In fact, the curates were the chief authors of the revolution which separated Mexico from Spain, and their relative condition to their superiors is not much benefited by it.

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If, from all the information which you may communicate to the Department, as well as that derived from other sources, it should appear that the difficulties and obstacles to the conducting of a campaign from the Rio Grande, the present base of your operations, for any considerable distance into the interior of Mexico, will be very great, the Department will consider whether the main invasion should not ultimately take place from some other point on the coast — say *Tampico* — or some other point in the vicinity of *Vera Cruz*. This suggestion is made with a view to call your attention to it, and to obtain from you such information as you may be able to impart. Should it be determined that the main army should invade Mexico at some other point than the Rio Grande — say the vicinity of *Vera Cruz* — a large and sufficient number of transport vessels could be placed at the mouth of the Rio Grande by the time the healthy season sets in — say early in November. The main army, with all its munitions, could be transported, leaving a sufficient force behind to hold and occupy the Rio Grande and all the towns and provinces which you may have conquered before that time. In the event of such being the plan of operations, your opinion is desired: what increased force, if any, will be required to carry it out with success? We learn that the army could be disembarked a few miles distant from *Vera Cruz*, and readily invest the town in its rear, without coming within the range of the guns of the fortress of San Juan d'Uloa. The town could be readily taken by land, while the fortress, being invested by land and sea, and all communication cut off, must soon fall.

The distance from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico is not more than one-third of that from the Rio Grande to the city of Mexico. Upon these important points, in addition to those mentioned in my letter of the 8th of June, your opinions and views are desired at the earliest period your duties will permit you to give them. In the mean time, the Department confidently relies on you to press forward your operations vigorously to the extent of your means, so as to occupy the important points within your reach on the Rio Grande and in the interior. It is presumed that Monterey, Chihuahua, and other places in your direction will be taken and held. If in your power to give the information, the Department desires to be informed of the distance from *Chihuahua* to *Guyamas* on the Gulf of California. Whether there be a road over which ordnance and baggage wagons could be taken, and whether it be practicable for an army to march from the former to the latter place, and what time would probably be required for mounted men, and what time for infantry or artillery to do so? This information is desired before the department can be prepared to decide upon the propriety of sending forward such an expedition.

Your answer to this communication you will please to address directly to the *President of the United States*.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

W. L. MARCY.

Major-General Z. Taylor, Commanding, &c.

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*General Taylor's Answer.*

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Matamoros, August 1, 1846.

SIR: I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the confidential communication of the Secretary of War, dated July 9th, and to present the following remarks in relation to the several points embraced in it. Agreeably to the injunction of the Secretary, this communication is addressed directly to the President of the United States.

First. As to the intercourse with the enemy, and means of obtaining information with regard to his movements, &c., I fear that no very satisfactory results will be obtained in the way proposed. The Mexican generals and other officers have exhibited, since the commencement of hostilities, a determination to hold with us as little intercourse as possible. A most rigid non-intercourse has been held throughout; and, since the 17th of June, no communication whatever has passed between the head-quarters of the two armies. I shall not fail to improve such occasions when they present themselves, in the manner pointed out by the Secretary. Since crossing the Rio Grande, it has been my constant aim to conciliate the people of the country, and I have the satisfaction of believing that much has been done towards that object, not only here, but at Reynosa, Camargo, and other towns higher up the river. The only obstacle I encounter in carrying out this desirable policy arises from the employment of volunteer troops. Some excesses have been committed by them upon the people and their property, and more, I fear, are to be apprehended. With every exertion, it is impossible effectually to control these troops, unaccustomed as they are to the discipline of camps, and losing, in bodies, the restraining sense of individual responsibility. With increased length of service, these evils, it is hoped, will diminish.

Second. In regard to availing ourselves of internal divisions and discord among the Mexicans, it is hardly time yet to say how far this may be relied upon as an element of success. I have good reason to believe that the country lying between the Rio Grande and Sierra Madre is disposed to throw off the yoke of the central government, and will perhaps do so as soon as it finds a strong American force between it and the capital. I shall do all in my power to encourage this movement, of which I received indications from many quarters, and shall comply fully with the instructions of the Secretary on that point.

Third. As to the military operations best calculated to secure an early and honourable peace, my report of July 2d will have



put the Department in possession of my views touching operations in this quarter, and I have now little to add to that report. Whether a large force can be subsisted beyond Monterey, must be determined by actual experiment, and will depend much upon the disposition of the inhabitants towards us. If a column (say 10,000 men) can be sustained in provisions at Saltillo, it may advance thence upon San Louis Potosi; and, I doubt not, would speedily bring proposals for peace. If, on the other hand, a column cannot be sustained beyond Monterey, it will be for the Government to determine, from considerations of state, whether a simple occupation of the frontier departments, (including Chihuahua and New Mexico,) or in addition to such occupation an expedition against the capital [by way of Vera Cruz] be most expedient. I cannot give a positive opinion as to the practicability of an expedition against Vera Cruz, or the amount of force that would probably be required for it. The Department of War must be much better informed than I am on that point. From the impracticable character of the routes from Tampico, particularly that leading to Mexico, I should judge an expedition against the capital from that point to be out of the question. The simultaneous embarkation of a large body of troops at Brazos Santiago, as proposed in the Secretary's communication, would be attended with great difficulty, if we may judge from the delay and danger which accompany the unloading of single transports, owing to the almost perpetual roughness of the bar, and boisterous character of the anchorage. It may also well be questioned whether a force of volunteers, without much instruction, more than those now here can receive in season for such an expedition, can prudently be allowed to form the bulk of an army destined for so delicate an operation as a descent upon a foreign coast, where it can have no proper base of operations or supplies.

I have already had occasion to represent to the Department that the volunteer force ordered to report to me here is much greater than I can possibly employ, at any rate in the first instance; the influx of twelve-months' volunteers has even impeded my forward movement, by engrossing all the resources

of the Quartermaster's Department to land them and transport them to healthy positions. This circumstance, in connection with the possibility of an expedition against ———, leads me to regret that one division of the volunteers had not been encamped—say at Pass Christian—where it could have been instructed until its services were required in the field.

These embarrassments, however, are now mostly overcome; the regular force is nearly all at Camargo; and all the arrangements are made to throw forward the volunteers to the same point. The President may be assured that no one laments more than I do the inevitable difficulties and delays that have attended our operations here, and that no exertion of mine has been or will be wanting to press forward the campaign with all possible vigour. But I deem it indispensable to take such amount of force, and observe such precautions, as not to leave success a matter of doubt.

In answer to the inquiry relative to the route from Chihuahua to Guaymas, I have the honour to submit a memorandum derived from ———, an American gentleman residing in this place, who has lived in Chihuahua, and travelled over the routes. The distances on the mule route are probably over-rated, as it is a direct route across the mountains. The wagon road, by the city of Arispe, is the only one practicable for artillery.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Maj. Gen. U. S. Army, commanding.

To his Excellency the Hon. JAMES K. POLK,  
President of the United States, Washington.

The clearness and comprehensiveness of the views set forth in this letter, show General Taylor's judgment in council to be equal to his energy in the field. While with his pen, as well as his sword, he was thus preparing the way for the prostration of Mexico, the internal dissensions of that country had reached their second climax in the year 1846. Paredes, who had sustained his sinking cause until the end of July, was at last over-

whelmed by the revolutionary torrent. The city of Vera Cruz pronounced in favour of Santa Anna on the 31st of that month. Three days afterwards, intelligence of the event reached the capital, which was immediately in the ferment of a kindred movement. General de Salas, and other military aspirants, issued a proclamation from the citadel of Mexico, of which they had taken possession, declaring the electoral laws of 1824 to be in force, denouncing all opposition to their purposes as traitorous, and inviting the return of political exiles, especially of "his excellency, Don Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, the well-deserving of his country, acknowledging him as general-in-chief of all the forces pledged and determined to fight, in order that the nation may recover its rights, secure its liberty, and govern itself." Paredes made a bold but futile resistance to de Salas and his compeers, and then, with a handful of men, fled from the capital. Soon afterwards, he was a prisoner in the castle of Perote.

Santa Anna, thus recalled, sailed from Cuba, with his personal followers, and arrived at Vera Cruz on the 16th of August, passing through the United States' blockading squadron, by the express permission of the President. This may not be the place to examine the policy of such an order. It is sufficient to state the fact. Santa Anna was received with enthusiasm by the citizens of Vera Cruz, which was shared by the Mexicans generally, and enabled him to combine opposing factions, and prepare the way for a concentrated and powerful resistance to the United States, to which none of his rivals was equal. It may be conceded that patriotism dictated the movement in his favour, if the immediate effects of his presence be accepted as evidence. The provisional government of de Salas had declared the constitution of 1824 to be in force, and the election of a new congress, to meet in December, was ordered conformably to that instrument. "Frankness, honour, honesty, and entire devotion to republican principles," were declared to be the basis of the new administration.

The way being thus paved for the return of Santa Anna to the city of Mexico, he left his hacienda, where he had sojourned



after his arrival at Vera Cruz ; and, at high noon, on the 15th of September, made a triumphal entry into the metropolis. He was hailed by the revolutionary chieftains, and by the people, with every demonstration of respectful and affectionate welcome ; and as he rode through the streets to the national palace, amid the waving of thousands of hands, the cheers of thousand of voices, the swell of music, the peal of bells, and the roar of artillery, no observer would have dreamed that a potent foreign enemy, already the victor on well-contested fields, and the captor of fortified towns, was at that moment marching to further conquest into the land of that exulting multitude. For Santa Anna, however, the day might well content his pride. The proscribed, the forsaken, the reviled, the banished, he returned to his country the chosen chief of her chiefs, his rivals prostrated and disgraced, and himself the idol of his own friends, and the admiration of theirs. In return for the confidence reposed in him, he promised a free government, and the fulfilment of every duty in resisting the enemies of his country. When the difficulties which beset him, in giving even the appearance of efficiency to this promise, are considered, candour must award him the praise of singular talent as a statesman, a soldier, and a popular leader.

On the 1st of September, General Taylor found his arrangements, after numerous difficulties and delays, so far completed, that he should be ready to advance upon the road to Monterey in the course of a few days. The evidence is of record, that the tardiness of his movements was not only not attributable to himself, but was caused by the neglect of the government or its agents in complying with his repeated and earnest suggestions. This fact is most forcibly set forth in the following plain and manly letter to the War Department :

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camargo, September 1, 1846.

SIR : Before marching for the interior, I beg leave to place on record some remarks touching an important branch of the public service, the proper administration of which is indispen-

sable to the efficiency of a campaign. I refer to the Quartermaster's Department. There is at this moment, when the army is about to take up a long line of march, a great deficiency of proper means of transport, and of many important supplies.

On the 26th April, when first apprizing you of the increased force called out by me, I wrote that I trusted the War Department would "give the necessary orders to the staff department, for the supply of this large additional force;" and when first advised of the heavy force of twelve-months' volunteers ordered hither, I could not doubt that such masses of troops would be accompanied, or preferably preceded by ample means of transportation, and all other supplies necessary to render them efficient. But such has not been the case. Suitable steamboats for the Rio Grande were not procured without repeated efforts directed from this quarter, and many weeks elapsed before a lodgement could be made at this place, the river being perfectly navigable.

After infinite delays and embarrassments, I have succeeded in bringing forward a portion of the army to this point, and now the steamers procured in Pittsburg are just arriving. I hazard nothing in saying, that if proper foresight and energy had been displayed in sending out suitable steamers to navigate the Rio Grande, our army would long since have been in possession of Monterey.

Again, as to land transport. At this moment our wagon train is considerably *less* than when we left Corpus Christi, our force being increased *five-fold*. Had we depended upon means from without, the army would not have been able to move from this place. But fortunately the means of land transport existed to some extent in the country, in the shape of pack-mules, and we have formed a train which will enable a small army to advance perhaps to Monterey. I wish it distinctly understood, that our ability to move is due wholly to means created here, and which could not have been reckoned upon with safety in Washington.

I have adverted to the grand points of water and land transportation. Of the want of minor supplies, the army has suf-

ferred more than enough. The crying deficiency of camp equipage has been partially relieved by the issue of cotton tents, of indifferent quality. Our cavalry has been paralyzed by the want of horse-shoes, horse-shoe-nails, and even common blacksmith's tools, while many smaller deficiencies are daily brought to my notice.

I respectfully request that the above statement, which I make in justice to myself and the service, may be laid before the general-in-chief and Secretary of War.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Maj. Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

In the 5th of September, the divisions of General Butler and Col. Twiggs having taken up the line of march, General Taylor himself followed the army, leaving General Patterson in command of all the forces on the Rio Grande in and below Camargo.

Although the main direction of Taylor's operations had been dictated by the Government, there yet remained, on the part of the latter, uncertainty in the details of the campaign. About the time that Taylor left Camargo, a despatch from the War Department, indicating its reliance upon his judgment, was intercepted by the enemy. Extracts from it are here given, however, for the purpose of showing how great were the acknowledged difficulties of the enterprize with which Taylor was charged.

"Our attention," says the Secretary of War, "is turned to Tampico as one of the places for the attack. It may be important to take that place, and hold possession of it and the surrounding country, with reference to your line of operations. Though our information is not so full and accurate as we desire, in relation to the interior of the country in the vicinity of Tampico, yet it is such as induces us to believe that this will be an important position to be occupied, to facilitate the future prosecution of the war. The possession of the northern pro-



vinces of Mexico, as far south as San Luis de Potosi, is undoubtedly an important object with reference to bringing the war to a successful termination. The difficulties you will encounter in pushing your forces thus far, can be much better appreciated by yourself than any other. San Luis de Potosi is stated to be from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty miles from Tampico; and if there be a good road between these two places—as some allege to be the case, while it is questioned by others—it will be highly advantageous to have possession of Tampico, and to penetrate the country from that point in the direction of San Luis de Potosi with a considerable force. This matter is under consideration, and will receive the attention it deserves. It is important, in respect to the plan of operations to be adopted for a movement on this point, that you should furnish the Government here, at the earliest period, with your opinion of the progress you will be able to make on your present line of operations. When you shall have arrived at Monterey, you will be enabled to determine as to the practicability of your further progress. It is important that we should know whether you can reach San Luis de Potosi, and your opinion on this point is particularly desired. The Administration is, to some extent, aware of the obstacles you will have to encounter, of the difficulties of sustaining so long a line of communication, and of the uncertainty as to the force which will oppose you; but your better information on these several points will enable you to form much more accurate opinions.

“Your views also as to the effect of taking possession of Tampico, of penetrating the enemy’s country from that point, of the amount and kind of force to be assigned to that service, are desired.

“It is not intended to weaken the force of your advancing column by any movements on the coast. It is supposed that fifteen hundred or two thousand men will be a sufficient number of troops to take and hold possession of Tampico. At least half of this force ought to be of the regular army. These,

it is presumed, can be obtained without withdrawing any of that description of force now with you.

“The amount of the volunteer force required for this purpose can be taken from the Rio Grande, it is presumed, without too much weakening that line.

“As you are in a situation to obtain more full and accurate information in relation to all the matters touched on in this communication, it is desirable—indeed quite important—that the Administration should have your views upon them. It is unnecessary to assure you that they will have an important influence upon its determinations.”

The column organized by General Taylor for the advance on Monterey consisted of six thousand six hundred and forty men. It was composed of the following corps :

## BUTLER'S DIVISION.

|           |   |                                                    |        |
|-----------|---|----------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Hamer's   | { | 1st Regiment Ohio Volunteers, Col. Mitchell.....   | 540    |
| Brigade.  | { | 1st Regiment Kentucky Volunteers, Col. Ormsby....  | 540    |
| Quitman's | { | 1st Regiment Tennessee Volunteers, Col. Campbell.. | 540    |
| Brigade.  | { | Mississippi Volunteers, Col. Davis.....            | 690    |
|           | { | Baltimore Battalion, Col. Watson.....              | 400    |
|           |   |                                                    | — 2710 |

## WORTH'S DIVISION.

|                                                              |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Regiment of Regulars, Col. P. F. Smith.....                  | 500        |
| Dragoons, and parts of 6th and other Infantry.....           | 1080       |
| Two Companies McCulloch's and Gillespie's Texas Rangers..... | 100        |
|                                                              | <hr/> 1700 |

## TWIGGS' DIVISION.

|                                                    |        |       |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Texas Cavalry, Col. Hays.....                      | 500    |       |
| U. S. Dragoons, Col. May.....                      | 250    |       |
| Flying Artillery, Duncan and Ridgely.....          | 100    |       |
| Artillery, one ten-inch Mortar, Capt. Webster..... | 60     |       |
| Parts of several Regiments, (Infantry).....        | 1320   |       |
|                                                    | <hr/>  | 2230  |
|                                                    |        | <hr/> |
|                                                    | Total, | 6640  |

Besides this force, General Taylor reserved two thousand one hundred men to garrison Camargo, and other forces for the points farther in his rear. The whole of this reserve was left under the command of General Patterson.

From the time that General Taylor took possession of Matamoros, it was his constant concern to bring the new corps of his army under the influence of strict discipline. He found himself suddenly charged with the command of not less than ten thousand volunteers, wholly unused to military restraint, and of necessity unconscious, for the most part, of its necessity for their common welfare, and the success of the enterprize in which they were enlisted. Brave and patriotic spirits, they were, at the same time, accustomed to the individual freedom of civil life; and the irksomeness of absolute conformity to rules of deportment, and the commands of superiors, could not be worn off without some exhibitions of insubordination. One of the first measures adopted by Taylor to secure proper discipline, was to forbid traffic in ardent spirits in all the towns under his authority. The weight of his own correct example as a man, and of his character as a commander, was material in accomplishing his purposes of military and moral organization. It is due, at the same time, to the volunteers, who, at the first call of the government, left their homes and profitable occupations for dangerous and ill-paid service in a distant territory, to mention that they bore with heroic patience, not only the ordinary labours of a soldier's life, but the pains of long marches, of exposure to burning suns and chilling dews, of hunger and thirst, and of sickness unto death. Hundreds and thousands of gallant young men, full of the noble impulses of their age, who, prompted by the desire to serve their country, and attracted by the hope of meriting well of their fellow-citizens, forsook the security and the endearments of peaceful life, to take up arms in a national cause, found themselves, after long travel and novel hardships, broken down by heart-sickness, wasted by disease, and perishing, not in the dazzling turmoil of the battle-field, but in the loathsome quietude of the hospital, tended, when yielding their last breath, by no fond or wonted hand, and unconsolated in that sad hour even by the empty reflection that their names would swell the ephemeral record of war's humblest victims.

On the 20th of August, General Worth's division had been



ordered to advance on the road to Monterey as far as Seralvo, a town distant seventy miles from Camargo, there to await further instructions of the commander-in-chief. The order was duly executed, the division arriving at Seralvo on the 25th. This movement was the commencement of a new period in the operations of Taylor in Mexico,—a period illustrated by extraordinary successes, confirming his title to every quality of a great general.

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## CHAPTER XII.

Enemy reinforced at Monterey—Taylor, with Twiggs' and Butler's Divisions, marches from Camargo—The March—Rest at Seralvo—Appearance of the Country—Mexican Forces discovered—The Advance before Monterey fired upon—Encampment at Walnut Springs—Description of Monterey—Its Fortifications—Mexican Forces in it—Ampudia's Address—Taylor's Reconnoissance—His Plan of Assault—Worth's Expedition—His movement on the 20th—Skirmish on the 21st—Occupation of the Saltillo Pass—Movements of Butler's Division—First Fort in the Eastern Suburbs carried—Terrible Fire of the Enemy's Batteries—Repulse of the Lancers—Two Forts on the Heights carried—Losses on the First Day—Dispositions for the Night.

GENERAL TAYLOR, having been advised by General Worth that large reinforcements of the enemy were arriving at Monterey, determined to delay no longer his advance upon that place. The divisions of Generals Twiggs and Butler were accordingly ordered to take up the line of march, and General Taylor himself left Camargo on the 7th of September. His route, for several days, lay through a country presenting few objects of interest. There was little vegetation except the thorny shrubbery peculiar to that vast region of Mexico. The aspect of the wilderness was varied by deep chasms or ravines, containing, generally, stagnant water, equally offensive in taste and odor. After the town of Mier was passed, the prospect began to improve. Distant mountains began to show their misty outline against the sky, and, as they were gradually approached,

a clear, cool stream, the Arroya Mier, one of their tributes to the Rio Grande, swept across the road,—a most welcome messenger to the troops oppressed with heat, and worn with travel. From this point, the country wore a new aspect, still, however, wild and primitive. The creeks and rivulets, fresh from the mountains, became frequent; and, on their banks, bloomed olive groves, with other denizens of the genial south. At intervals, far between, an humble rancho was discovered; and, more frequently, a rustic cross, marking a grave, or the spot where some wayfarer had been murdered.

The three divisions of the army having rested at Seralvo, the first, under General Twiggs, resumed its march from that town on the 13th, and the others promptly followed. The road now broke fairly into the mountainous region. The Sierra Alvo, a magnificent elevation of three thousand feet, arose to the right, with an ascent so sudden, that from the peaks, as seen from below, it seemed a stone might be cast into the road. On the left frowned another height, while in front the grand range wore the appearance of an immense amphitheatre. As the ridges were gained the scenery changed, presenting, apparently, a vast plain, covered with chapparal, in crossing which, however, it was found to be intersected with deep and rocky ravines, washed by the highland torrents.

The Rangers, of Worth's division, thrown forward during his encampment at Seralvo, had discovered a large body of Mexican cavalry posted in the neighbourhood of Marin, a village on the north side of the river San Juan. Subsequently, on the march, slight skirmishes took place between advanced parties, but the enemy continued to retire towards Monterey. On the seventeenth the army was concentrated at Marin, twelve miles north-east of that city. The following morning, at day-break, the whole was in motion, General Twiggs' division leading, General Worth's following, and General Butler's bringing up the rear. In this order the San Juan had been crossed, and the head of the main column was about six miles from Monterey, when the report of artillery was heard. The





# REFERENCES.

1. Road from Camargo.
2. Mortar and Howitzer batteries, under Captain Webster, posted in the ravine.
3. Direction of Twigg's and Butler's columns against the east of the city.
4. Chain of works defending the east of the city.
5. The Creek or Arroyo San Juan.
6. Fort Soldado.
7. Redout on Federacion hill—the first stormed by General Worth.
8. Road to Saltillo.
9. Independencia hill and fort.
10. Bishop's Palace.
11. Citadel.
12. Direction of Worth's march from the camp to the Saltillo road.
13. Road to Monclova.

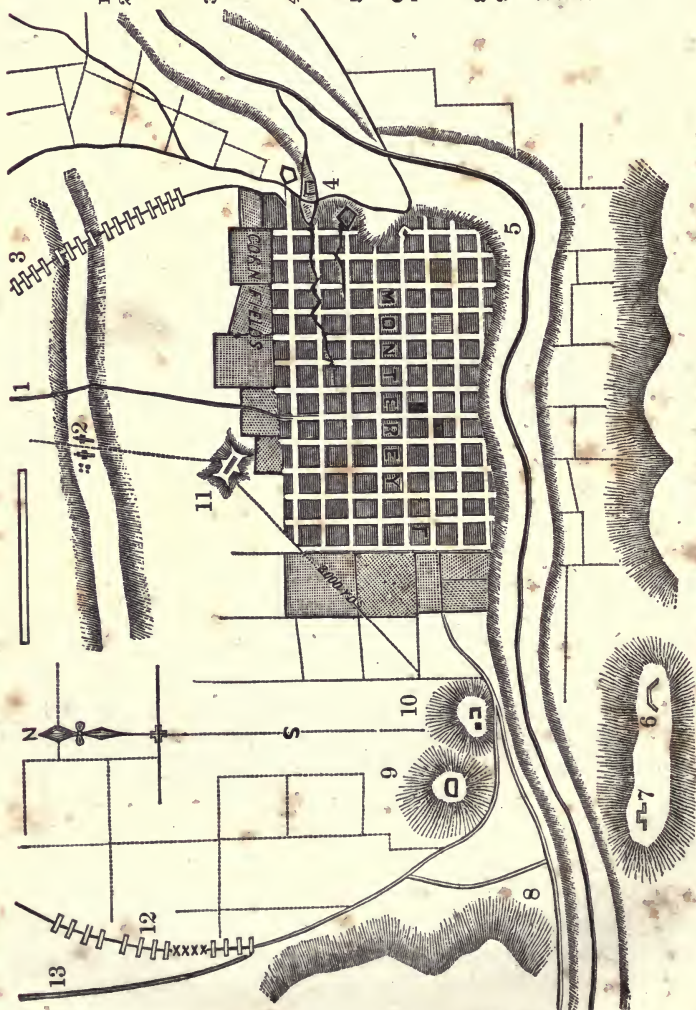


DIAGRAM OF DEFENCES, ETC., OF MONTERREY.

Texas Rangers being in advance, it was known at once that the fire was from the enemy's batteries, directed against them, and a reconnoitring party, which escorted General Taylor within full view of the town. Doubts had been entertained whether resistance would be finally offered to the occupation of it; but these doubts now ceased, and the troops, two-thirds of them volunteers who had never met an enemy in the field, started forward with vociferous cheers, forgetting fatigue in their anxiety to prove themselves worthy of the conquest which they sought. It was not General Taylor's intention to commence the assault that day. He therefore ordered a halt, on a small stream called the Walnut Springs, three miles north of the city, while a thorough reconnoissance of its position and defences might be effected by the officers of the engineer corps.

Monterey, the capital of the State of New Leon, is a city of fifteen thousand inhabitants. It is distant about one hundred and fifty miles from Camargo, near the base of the grand mountainous range called the Sierra Madre, which sweeps around its south-western angle. The Arroya San Juan, a small branch of the San Juan river, runs beyond the town, parallel to the curve of the mountain. On the north, whence the road from Camargo approaches, is an extensive and gradually inclined plain, rising from the margin of the creek, interrupted only by a dry ravine crossing it about three-fourths of a mile in front of the town; which, at that distance, is seen embosomed in trees, revealing its white walls and spires through the openings of their luxuriant foliage. The plain is varied with patches of chapparal, and fields of corn and sugar-cane; and the light of this sunny undergrowth is relieved by the umbrage of orange, lemon, citron, and olive groves, and other beautiful natives of that genial climate. The mountains, which wall up the southern and western horizon, rear their rugged and mighty heads far above the clouds of the valley, and a single gorge marks the only continuation to Saltillo, of the roads from the Rio Grande, which coalesce at Monterey.

To save this important and favoured spot from the posses-

sion of an enemy, was a purpose which stimulated the energies of its people and their government. To this end, the natural defences of the site were improved with skill and great diligence. In front, and to the right of the town, a very extensive and strong fortress, known as the "citadel," had for some time been erected. Standing on the plain, it covers an area of about three acres, the walls of solid masonry, thick and high, with bastions commanding all approach from the north-east, the north, and north-west. On the eastern side of the city, several redouts were built near the suburbs, forbidding ingress in that quarter. The range of the southernmost of these extended to the base of the heights in the rear, between which and the town, as has been described, is the course of the Arroyo San Juan. Following this course to the southwest extremity of the city, two forts appear on the hills of its further side; while on the nearer side of it, as well as of the Saltillo road, two other fortifications crown successive elevations covering the pass. Of these latter, the lower one is a large and unfinished structure, designed for the Bishop's Palace, and known as such. The upper one, more remote from the city, is an independent redout, erected expressly for defence. Entrance to the town on that quarter was further forbidden by the walls of the cemetery, forming a strong breast-work with embrasures. These numerous and well-constructed works were mounted with forty-two heavy cannon.

In addition to these special external defences, and many street barricades then constructed, Monterey presents in its plan, and in the form of its buildings, extraordinary obstacles to an assault. Regularly laid out, a few pieces of artillery command the whole length of the principal streets. But its chief security is the stone walls of the houses, which, rising above the flat roofs, and forming around them and the courts regular parapets, afford thorough protection to their defenders. Each dwelling is thus a separate castle, and the whole city one grand fortification, suggested by nature and consummated by art. To man the works, Ampudia, to whom the command was entrusted, had eight thousand regular troops, and several thousand militia



and armed citizens, with abundant supplies of small arms and ammunition in addition to the ordnance already mentioned. While these preparations for an attack were in progress, and before his forces had been concentrated, he issued the following address, showing his contempt for the little army of the Americans, then about marching to the capture of the northern stronghold of Mexico :

“SOLDIERS:—The enemy, numbering only 2500 regular troops, the remainder being only a band of adventurers, without valour or discipline, are, according to reliable information, about advancing upon Seralvo, to commit the barbarity of attacking this most important place. We count near 3000 regulars and auxiliary cavalry, and these will defeat them again and again, before they can reach this city. Soldiers, we are constructing fortifications, to make our base at a convenient time, and drive back this enemy at the point of the bayonet.

“Soldiers! three great virtues make the soldier worthy of his profession; discipline, constancy under fatigue, and valour. He who at this moment would desert his colours, is a coward and a traitor to his country. Our whole nation, and even foreign countries are the witnesses of your conduct. The question now is, whether our independence shall be preserved or forever lost; and its solution is in your hands.

“I have assured the supreme government of the triumph of our arms, confiding in your loyalty and enthusiasm; and we will prove to the whole world that we are worthy sons of the immortal Hidalgo, Morelo, Allende, Iturbide, and so many other heroes who knew how to die combatting for the independence of our cherished country.

“Soldiers! victory or death must be our only device!

“PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

“Head-Quarters, Monterey, September 14, 1846.”

From the plain of the road by which he had approached Monterey, General Taylor, on the 19th of September, surveyed its fortifications, within range of the guns of the Citadel. He

then halted the army, as we have seen, at Walnut Springs, where the camp was formed, and ordered a close reconnoissance of the outworks on both sides of the town by the officers of the engineers and topographical engineers. The result of this examination, boldly and carefully executed under the direction of Major Mansfield and Captain Williams, at once determined the plan of operations. It became evident that an attempt should be made to gain, by a detour to the west, the Saltillo road, at its junction with the roads leading from the city; and from that point, cutting off the enemy's supplies and his retreat, to storm the heights overlooking it and the southwestern angle of the city. For this difficult and important service General Taylor detached a division under General Worth, on the following day, the 20th, at noon.

The division was composed of Duncan's battery (four pieces) of Flying Artillery, the Artillery Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Childs, and the Eighth Regiment of Infantry, under Captain Screvin, constituting the First Brigade, under Lieutenant Colonel Staniford; the Flying Artillery (four pieces), under Lieutenant Mackall, the Fifth Infantry, under Major Scott, the Seventh, under Captain Niles, and one company Louisiana volunteers, under Captain Blanchard, composing the Second Brigade, under General Persifer F. Smith; and Colonel Hay's regiment of Texas Mounted Riflemen. Captain Sanders, military engineers, and Lieutenant Meade, topographical engineers, accompanied the division. General Worth, with this command, turning off the direct road which connects Marin with Monterey, sought another to the right, called the Presquina Grande road. His progress was slow, the way having to be cut for the artillery, through fields of corn, sugar cane, and underwood; but at sundown he had advanced six miles, and reaching the Presquina Grande road, came within range of the guns of the fort occupying the crest of the height, midway on which is situated the Bishop's Palace. A reconnoissance, under cover of the Texas Mounted Rifles, was then made along the road to its junction with the Saltillo road, and the importance of occupying the point of

intersection was evident. It was also apparent that this could not be done without opposition, as the enemy's position would thereby be turned, and his communication with Saltillo and the Presquina Grande route would be intercepted. On the night of the 20th the command bivouacked on the road. It was cold and rainy, and there were neither tents nor blankets to cover the men. But they bore the exposure cheerfully, encouraged with the expectation of achieving some daring enterprize on the morrow.

At dawn on the following morning, General Worth disposed his force for the march in such order as to be prepared for an attack at any point. The Texas Cavalry, supported by the light companies of the First Brigade, under Captain C. F. Smith, (both extended or contracted according to the ground over which they moved) composed the advance of the column. Duncan's light artillery and battalion heads of columns followed. Pursuing for two miles, in this order, the road winding along the base of the mountain, a turn around one of its projections brought immediately in view a strong body of Mexican cavalry and infantry. The former instantly and impetuously charged, and were received with a well-aimed and deliberate volley from the rifles of the mounted Texans. At the same instant, the infantry of the First Brigade, Duncan's guns, and a section of Mackall's, opened upon them with equal effect. Owing to the narrowness of the road, the Second Brigade could not be brought into action. While the enemy thus maintained the engagement with his troops on the road, a battery was throwing shells from the height above it. In fifteen minutes, however, both his infantry and cavalry gave way, leaving one hundred killed and wounded, among them a colonel of the Lancers. The routed troops fled along the Saltillo road, hotly pressed by the victors, until they entered the gorge which unites all the roads from Monterey. Here the pursuit ceased; the important point being occupied, which intercepted all supplies and reinforcements from that quarter to the city. As the division was there exposed to the batteries on the heights, General Worth moved it about half a



mile farther, and then directed his attention to the means of carrying by assault those elevated fortresses, the possession of which was essential to any closer operations against the city itself.

While General Worth was about to make an assault upon the works to the right and rear of the town, General Taylor, in conformity with his own plans, as well as a suggestion from General Worth, determined on a diversion in his favour, by ordering the other divisions to make a strong demonstration, to the left and centre, on the lower part of the town. During the night of the 20th, two twenty-four-pound howitzers, and a ten-inch mortar, under Captain Webster, were placed in battery, facing the "citadel," in the ravine crossing the plain in the approach to the city. Early on the morning of the 21st, the First Division, under General Twiggs, composed of the Third and Fourth Regiments of Regular Infantry, Captain Bragg's Flying Artillery, forming Lieut. Col. Garland's Brigade, and the First Regiment of Regular Infantry, and the Washington and Baltimore battalion of volunteers, forming Lieut. Col. Wilson's Brigade, were marched from the camp at Walnut Springs to the ravine where the mortar battery was planted. There the command was formed for the assault, the three regiments of regulars being ordered to take possession of some houses on the right of the enemy's works, situated on the east of the city, and the volunteers to advance upon the works directly. General Butler's Division, composed of Quitman's Brigade, the Tennessee and Mississippi Regiments, and the Ohio Regiment of Hamer's Brigade of volunteers, having formed in front of the ravine soon after Twiggs' Division moved from that position against the city, were prepared to support the latter in the assault.

The affair of the day on that side, commenced by a heavy discharge of artillery from the citadel, which was ineffectually answered by the howitzer and mortar batteries; the shot of the latter falling short of the town, while that of the citadel fell among Butler's Division in front of the ridge. The Division of General Twiggs continued to advance under tremendous

cross fires from the chain of forts on the left of the town. The three regiments of regulars, with inflexible firmness, moved to their designated positions, gaining the town so as to annoy the enemy's works in that quarter on the flank and rear. Rivalling the courage of these elder troops, and filled with the enthusiasm of volunteers, the Washington and Baltimore battalion pressed onward in the teeth of batteries pouring ruinous discharges upon their ranks. Bragg's artillery, at the same moment, was worked within direct range of the enemy's heavy guns.

When the battalion had approached close to one of the forts, the men were ordered to lie down for momentary respite from its guns. These, however, were soon depressed, when a portion of the command, led on by their officers, rushed into a narrow street, having but few houses on either side. Here they were raked by three batteries within a hundred yards, and by the twelve-pounders of the large work, which enfiladed their column during the whole period of its progress. At the intersection of the streets, high and strong barricades of solid masonry had been erected, and from these and the tops of the houses, thousands of smaller arms rained a deadly shower upon them. Numbers of the regulars and detachments of the volunteers were similarly engaged at other points in the same quarter of the town.

For about an hour this contest had proceeded with unabated fury, when Butler's division was ordered to sustain the advance. His men, already formed in line, had watched with eager interest the progress of their comrades, burning for the moment when they should be summoned to share in the strife. The Kentucky Regiment, Col. Ormsby, being left unwillingly to protect the howitzer and mortar batteries, Quitman's Brigade, (the Tennessee Regiment, Col. Campbell, and the Mississippi, Col. Davis,) and Col. Mitchell's Ohio Regiment, forming alone Hamer's Brigade, moved off, the former to the left, to support the regulars of Twiggs' Division, and the latter to support Bragg's battery, which had already lost about twenty horses, and was in danger of being captured. With emulous cheers, defying the roar of the citadel's ordnance, the two commands

sped on to their terrible duty and their course for full a mile, exposed to its unceasing fire. The Ohio volunteers reached the suburbs, there to be greeted, as their friends had been before them, with the raking discharges of batteries in front, and on both flanks. Breasting the iron torrent, and unable to reach an enemy behind the house-walls and barriers, they still struggled on, passing gardens and ditches, which exposed them to the full play of both artillery and musketry. At last, some of the foremost, mounting a wall, came close upon a corps of the enemy, and drove it to a battery farther in the town. At this point, opportunity was afforded of returning their shot with effect,—but the contest was unequal, our men being exposed upon the wall, and the Mexicans protected by their breastworks. At this point, General Butler was met by Major Mansfield, who had conducted a command of Twiggs' Division against one of the batteries, and who advised the general to advance no farther, as he would come within range of an irresistible fire from other batteries commanding the streets. General Taylor was not far in the rear of this spot,—exposed constantly to the enemy's fire,—and learning this fact from General Butler, ordered the Ohio men to retire.

Meanwhile, the Tennessee and the Mississippi volunteers had reached a position on the north-east of the city. At this point, was a strong fort, the rear of which Colonel Garland had endeavoured to gain, but was met with such a severe fire, which could not be returned, that he was compelled to retire. At the moment, however, that the Mississippians and Tennesseans were coming on, Captain Backus, of the 1st regular infantry, with parts of his own and other companies of that regiment, had mounted the roof of a tannery commanding the fort, and was pouring into it an effectual discharge of musketry. Several companies of the Fourth Infantry, advancing within close range of its guns, received a terrible fire, which instantly killed and wounded one-third of their number, and caused them to fall back. At this juncture, Quitman's volunteers, the Tennesseans being well in advance, pressed forward, and preserving their line under a fire which made constant breaches in



its living wall, rushed upon the works, and carried them at the point of the bayonet. A strong, stone building in the rear was taken at the same time. The conduct of these two regiments, in this assault, was distinguished equally by the hot-blooded recklessness of youth, and the steady bravery of veterans. Whether in approaching the enemy's batteries, when the balls were hurled in torrents upon them, or when mounting the barriers to engage their defenders hand to hand; these gallant troops were alike heedless of every result save the fulfilment of the immediate task assigned them.

In the fort, five pieces of artillery, a large amount of ammunition, and thirty prisoners, including three officers, were captured. But the prize was purchased at a fearful cost of blood, and much more was yet to be paid before other possessions of the enemy could be acquired.

As soon as General Taylor learned that this fort was carried, he countermanded the order for Butler's division to withdraw, and ordered that work, and other defences on the side of the town which had been already gained, to be maintained. Hamer's brigade, the Ohio volunteers, now moved farther to the left, towards another strong fort in the line of its eastern defences. It required half an hour to come within close range of this work, during which the regiment was exposed to a destructive fire, from three different batteries concentrated upon them. It was resolved to attempt to carry the fort by storm, when General Butler was wounded, and, at the same time, Colonel Mitchell, commanding the regiment. A murderous discharge of musketry swept the ranks continually, and the attempt was abandoned, the force being withdrawn to a position of less exposure.

The battery of the fort captured by Quitman's brigade was now turned upon this second work; and, under its cover, the artillery of Bragg and Ridgely was served, supported by parts of several regiments scattered during the general assault. Subsequently, Captain Webster's howitzer was made to bear from the captured fort upon the second fort, against which the Ohio volunteers had made their daring but unsuccessful movement.

The latter, on retiring to the skirts of the town, at a point where a portion of the Mississippi regiment had also returned, found themselves dispersed on the plain, so as to present apparently an object of easy attack from a body of lancers then in view. The latter, accordingly, dashed towards them, but not in time to prevent their forming an imperfect front so as to meet the charge. On came the cavalry, which is the boast of Mexico, striking with their lances, as they swept over the field, the Americans who lay wounded and helpless upon it, until within short range of the volunteers' muskets, when a volley from the line checked their career, bearing down the foremost horses and riders, and driving the rest in disorder back to their position.

During this, and other independent scenes in the drama of the day, parties and individuals of all regiments were in the streets, charging on the barricades, or returning the incessant fire of the enemy's batteries and lighter arms whenever an object for effectual aim was presented. General Taylor, who was almost constantly within range of the flying shot, ordered as many of the First, Third, and Fourth Infantry, or the Baltimore Battalion, as could be collected, again to enter the town, and carry, if possible, the second battery, against which Captain Webster's howitzer was then directed. Of this mixed force, Lieutenant Colonel Garland took the command, and a gallant effort was made to achieve the object. Receiving a fire from every direction, it pressed on to gain the rear of the work, and taking a position, maintained it for some time with the aid of Ridgely's battery. But the work proved too strong and well defended at every approach to be stormed with success, and the command was withdrawn. During this movement, Captain Bragg's artillery, supported by Captain Miller with a force of regulars and volunteers, dispersed a body of cavalry making a demonstration in front of the town.

Hours passed, while these various and daring exertions were made to obtain possession of the chain of fortifications on the east and south-east of the city. They were defended by the Mexicans with constancy and valour, but with every advantage

over the assailants in numbers, position, and arms. The latter were subjected, in all their movements, to terrible cross and direct fires, hurling upon them a continual stream of heavy shot, grape, and musket balls. Yet there was no wavering, no abatement of ardour. Volunteers and regulars, the men by whom the clash of arms was then first heard, and they who had chosen arms as a profession, fought and fell side by side, scores on scores, and yet all who stood, still stood firmly, still strove on, undaunted by the slaughter which raged around them.

The main object, had in view by General Taylor in the assault upon the east side of the city, had so far been entirely accomplished. A long-continued diversion had been made in favour of General Worth's movements in the opposite quarter. To them we now revert.

After having, early in the morning, repulsed the enemy's lancers posted at the spur of the mountain, and advanced to a position on the Saltillo road about half a mile west of the gorge, where the several roads from the north-eastern valley unite, a further reconnoissance was made of the fortifications on the heights on each side. A brief mention has already been made of these works, but a further description is necessary to a clear understanding of the operations of General Worth's division.

The Creek or Arroyo San Juan, which sweeps, with the line of the mountain base, around the southern and eastern sides of the city, has its source to the south-west, and passing through the great gorge of the range in that direction, defines the line of the road to Saltillo, which is constructed on its northern margin. From this creek, at a point about a mile southwest of the city, and facing towards it, may be seen about six hundred yards to the right, a height called Federacion, which was surmounted by a strong redout; and on the same ridge, half a mile nearer the city, another height crowned by a work called "Fort Soldado." On the left of the creek, opposite these elevations, rises Mitre Mountain; on a prominence of which, called Independencia, nearly due north of Federacion, and about half a mile distant from it in an air line, was a third



fortified work. On a lower point of the same ridge, forming Independencia, and in a south-eastern direction, about a quarter of a mile nearer to the city, stands the Bishop's Palace. These four works, two on each side of the Saltillo road, were reared on eminences sufficiently lofty and precipitous to be difficult of access, while they thoroughly commanded the deep valley between them, and the slopes on every other side.

The first progress of General Worth was around the southwestern base of Independencia, which brought his command between it and Federacion. It was determined that the first effort of his command should be made against the fort on the latter, the possession of all the heights being vital to the advance of the whole army on Saltillo. At noon, on the 21st, he ordered four companies of the Regular Artillery Battalion, under Captain C. F. Smith, and six companies—Green's, McGowan's, Gillespie's, Chandlis', Ballowes', and McCulloch's, of the Texas Rifles, under Major Chevalier, (both commands numbering about three hundred men, and acting in co-operation,) to storm the batteries first on Federacion Hill, and then to carry Fort Soldado. During the morning the enemy's guns had not been idle, but when the movement for this assault commenced, they were served with redoubled zeal. Captain Smith led his men to the foot of the hill, whence, looking up, the toil of an unopposed and unencumbered ascent might well daunt common energies. Upward however they went, breasting sometimes the plunging discharges of the enemy's batteries high above them, and sometimes screened for a moment by a projecting rock, or a cluster of underwood. Occasionally they paused to return the fire, and in a moment were again climbing the rugged and perilous steep, from whose frowning crest balls of iron and copper rained upon them. At the same time bodies of Mexican light troops sallied from the works on both adjacent hills, and forming on every favourable point, seconded their heavy guns with volleys of musketry.

At this moment, the enemy menacing Smith's command with an overwhelming superiority of numbers, Captain Miles, with the Seventh Infantry, was ordered to his support. The

firing now became general, as the ascent of the storming party brought them within more effectual range of the forces above them. Other reinforcements of the latter being displayed around their works, General Worth directed General Smith, with the Fifth Infantry, under Major Scott, and the Louisiana Volunteers, under Captain Blanchard, to the further aid of the troops engaged. This third command pressed eagerly on to the assault; and General Smith perceiving the practicability of storming Fort Soldado simultaneously with the attack already commenced on the other work, divided the supporting force, and directed the Fifth and Seventh, and the Louisiana Volunteers against Soldado. Captain Smith's men continuing to mount the Federacion height, drove the enemy up and back upon the entrenchment, the contest becoming closer and closer, until, charging with the bayonet, they cleared the breastwork, and while its routed defenders fled precipitately down the opposite side of the hill, tore down their standard, and raised the first American flag that ever waved in the mountain breezes of Mexico. Loud and heart-stirring were the cheers which hailed it, echoed from the valley by the gallant troops, then rushing up to plant a kindred banner on the neighbouring height.

Immediately, the piece of ordnance (a nine-pounder) found in the captured works was directed against Fort Soldado, and the main body of Captain Smith's command then started in support of the other command. On the latter went, as they began the ascent receiving in their midst a tempest of grape and canister. With good will, however, they emulated the gallantry of their friends; Captain Hays, with about fifty Texas rifles, joining in the work. Conquering the acclivity by the aid of every stone that offered a foothold, and every bush within grasp, they approached the Mexican lines near enough to use their muskets with effect. Loading and firing as they ascended, unchecked for an instant by the fire from above, they rose at last to within fifty yards of the wall, and then with a shout drove the enemy from it, and turned upon the confused and fleeing mass the artillery which themselves had loaded. Having served this purpose for the moment, it was then di-

rected, together with the gun on Federacion Hill, against the Bishop's Palace. The fire was returned from the latter with round shot and shell; the valley of the Saltillo road separating the works only six hundred yards from the Palace. In these brilliant exploits, the officers already mentioned, and every subordinate and man, behaved with admirable daring. The whole force against both fortifications did not exceed six or seven hundred men, who, reckless of opposing numbers, and of their superior and strong position, charged up to them and swept them from their lofty perch.

The sun was descending when the second fort had been carried, and about the same time, on the same side of the creek, at the south-eastern extreme of the city, the enemy's cavalry, having been previously checked by the Ohio and a part of the Mississippi regiments, made a demonstration against the troops exposed in that quarter. Ridgely brought his light battery to bear on them, and scattered them until they sought shelter in the city.

After this no important movement was effected in any direction. The approach of night and a severe rain storm arrested the terrible labours of the day—terrible to both parties. The divisions on the east of the town had lost many officers of great merit, and many more men, who, if indomitable energy and valour were the test, should have also been chiefs, not followers. Among the notable dead were, Captain Williams of the topographical engineers, who aided heroically in directing the assault upon the first redout; Lieutenants Terrett and Dilworth, of the First Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Watson, of the Baltimore Battalion, one of the first to fall while cheering on his men, under the raking cross fires of the street works; Brevet Major Barbour, of the Third Infantry, and Lieutenants Irwin and Hazlett of the same regiment; Captain Allen and Lieutenant Putnam, of the Tennessee Volunteers, which indomitable corps left, besides these officers, nearly half its numbers dead or wounded in the streets and fields; Lieutenant Woods, of the Second Infantry, who had distinguished himself also at Resaca de la Palma; Lieutenant Hoskins, of the Fourth



Infantry, and Lieutenant Colonel Hett, of the Ohio Volunteers, a regiment worthy of the officer, and which freely mingled its blood with his. Nearly four hundred of all the troops, Regulars and Volunteers, engaged east of the town, were killed or wounded. The avenues at times were choked with their bodies, where guns of the forts had centred on them. The Kentucky Regiment was not brought into the action farther than to support the field battery posted in front of the citadel. It stood ready several times to receive a threatened charge of a large body of lancers, and rendered efficient aid in maintaining the demonstration in front of the town.

General Worth's loss was comparatively very small, owing to the less exposed position of his command. How they performed the tasks assigned them has been seen. Thirty-six hours had they been without food, one night in the rain without shelter or blankets, and now exposed on the coming of a second to a violent storm, and equally unprotected.

The divisions of Butler and Twiggs, under the immediate command of General Taylor, were ordered back to the camp, except the Regulars of the First Division and Ridgely's battery, left to garrison the captured works, under Lieutenant Colonel Garland, and one battalion of the First Kentucky Regiment, detailed to work at the entrenchments through the night, and strengthen the positions acquired on the eastern part of the city. So wearied were all the troops with the labours of the day, that a witness relates, of those ordered back to the camp, many with difficulty reached it.

Throughout the day General Taylor was constantly near or on the ground of actual conflict, sharing its dangers, and by his calm bravery giving effectual virtue to his directions. General Worth, apprehending a surprise, was obliged to keep most of his force on the watch through the night of the 21st. The few who sought rest had no shelter, and lay down under the heavy fall of rain, with their arms in their hands. The commands in the eastern quarter of the city enjoyed no better protection or repose. Thus ended the labours of the first day before Monterey.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Independencia carried—Sortie from the Palace—Enemy repulsed and Palace taken—Operations on the Eastern Quarter—Progress towards the Heart of the Town—Worth's Progress on Opposite Side—Command of the Main Plaza—Flag of Truce—Suspension of the Attack—Taylor's Despatch—Correspondence with Ampudia and the Governor—Taylor's Detailed Report of the Siege—Extract from Worth's Report—Comments on the Action—Conference between Ampudia and Taylor—Commissioners on the Capitulation appointed—Proceedings of the Commission—Terms of Capitulation—Report of Killed and Wounded.

GENERAL Worth had determined that the operations of the 22d, in the rear of the city, should commence against the work surmounting Independencia height and the Bishop's Palace, making the first assault on the former. This duty was assigned to one company of the Third Regulars (artillery battalion), two companies of the Fourth, three companies of the Eighth, under Captain Screvin, and two hundred Riflemen, under Colonel Hays and Lieutenant Colonel Walker, the whole command under Lieutenant Colonel Childs, conducted by Captain Sanders, of the military, and Lieutenant Meade, of the topographical engineers. At three o'clock on the morning of the 22d this force was in motion. The rain and darkness favoured its approach to the enemy's position. The ascent of the hill was commenced and conducted without molestation. As the acclivity was gradually overcome, the gray light of morning began to struggle through the mist which clouded its crest. Quietly and steadily the command ascended until within a hundred yards of the top, when a body of the enemy posted among the rocks and bushes came full in view. Expecting an attack they had awaited it. They fired and retreated, while assailants hastened up, reserving their fire until close upon the redoubt, when delivering one general and deadly volley, they dashed into it with the bayonet, while the Mexicans fled down the other side. Just then, as the coming sun streaked the white mists of the mountain peaks, the emulous flag of the Union floated above the third of the enemy's lofty strongholds.

It was found that the guns of this post had been removed in the night to the Bishop's Palace, then the only remaining posi-

tion of the Mexicans on the heights in the rear of the town. The high walls of massive masonry, defended by a howitzer, and two pieces of ordnance, besides a heavy force of musketry, forbade any attempt to carry the latter work without the aid of artillery. To procure this, Lieutenant Rowland, of Duncan's Artillery, was ordered from the main camp with a twelve-pound howitzer, and so great was his despatch, that, in two hours, with the aid of fifty men from the line under Captain Sanders, selected for the purpose of pointing out the least difficult route, that enterprizing and gallant officer, (as he is justly termed in the language of the General's official report,) had ascended the broken and steep acclivity of Independencia hill, and planted his gun in position. From it, under cover of the breastwork, an effectual fire was immediately directed against the Palace, distant about four hundred yards on the next point of the ridge. While this battery was thus brought to bear, part of the forces having possession of the heights on the opposite side of the road were ordered over. They consisted of the Fifth Infantry, Major Scott, and the Louisiana volunteers, Captain Blanchard, and reached the position about 8 o'clock.

The enemy made several demonstrations of an attempt to regain the work last captured. At length, a large body of lancers swept around and up the hill with that intent. A sortie, by a strong force, was also made from the Palace. General Worth anticipated the movement. Lieutenant Colonel Childs had advanced two companies of light troops, under Captain Vinton, which skirmished with the enemy's advance. The main body was drawn up, with Hays' and Walker's Rifles, on the flanks. As the enemy rapidly advanced, the light troops retired in good order, and maintained a fire, until a general discharge from the whole line was ordered. The Mexicans were at once thrown into confusion, and fled, pursued by the whole force, under Colonel Childs, beyond the Palace, which the latter then entered, taking possession of it, and the fort adjoining it. Down the enemy rushed towards the city, crowding a street which extended to the Palace; and, as they fled, the guns of their last mountain fastness were turned upon them.



Thus terminated the complete investment of the works commanding the rear of the city, and the communication with the country to the south-west. The honour of the achievement was enhanced by the fact, that it was attended with but trifling sacrifice on the part of the victors. Prudence had gone hand in hand with courage, even in the boldest enterprizes of the two eventful days.

General Worth's next care was to place the captured guns in positions on the heights to reach the great plaza of the town; and, except a necessary garrison for Independencia hill, the division was concentrated at the Bishop's Palace, to be prepared the next day for an assault on the city from that quarter.

The day, the 22d, which had so well employed Worth's Division, was less actively spent by the wearied troops of the other division in the eastern quarter of the town. According to the official report, the citadel and other works continued to fire at parties exposed to their range, and at the work now occupied by our troops. The guard left in it the preceding night, except Captain Ridgely's company, was relieved at mid-day by General Quitman's brigade. Captain Bragg's battery was thrown under cover in front of the town, to repel any demonstration of cavalry in that quarter. During the night of the 22d the enemy evacuated nearly all his defences in the lower part of the city. This was reported to General Taylor early in the morning of the 23d, by General Quitman, who had already meditated an assault upon those works. He immediately sent instructions to that officer, leaving it to his discretion to enter the city, covering his men by the houses and walls, and advance carefully so far as he might deem it prudent. After ordering the remainder of the troops as a reserve, under the orders of Brigadier General Twiggs, General Taylor repaired to the abandoned works, and discovered that a portion of General Quitman's brigade had entered the town, and were successfully forcing their way towards the principal plaza. He then ordered up the second regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, who entered the city, dismounted, and, under the immediate orders of General Henderson, co-operated with General

Quitman's brigade. Captain Bragg's battery was also ordered up, supported by the Third Infantry, and after firing for some time at the Cathedral, a portion of it was likewise thrown into the city. The American troops advanced from house to house, and from square to square, until they reached a street but one square in rear of the principal plaza, in and near which the enemy's force was mainly concentrated. This advance was conducted vigorously, but with due caution, and although destructive to the enemy, was attended with but small loss on our part. Captain Ridgely, in the mean time, had served a captured piece in the first battery against the city, until the advance of our men rendered it imprudent to fire in the direction of the Cathedral. General Taylor was satisfied that his troops could operate successfully in the city, and that the enemy had retired from the lower portion of it to make a stand behind his barricades. As General Quitman's brigade had been on duty the previous night, he determined to withdraw the troops to the evacuated works, and concert with General Worth a combined attack upon the town. The troops accordingly fell back deliberately, in good order, and resumed their original positions, General Quitman's brigade being relieved after nightfall by that of General Hamer.

When General Worth heard, on the morning of the 23d, the heavy and continuous fire from the opposite side of the city, he concluded that a main attack was in progress under the direction of General Taylor, and that orders for his co-operation had miscarried, owing to the long circuit over which it was necessary to carry them. His own intention was to have prosecuted his success during that night, but he instantly gave orders to this effect. To quote the clear and concise language of Worth's despatch, two columns of attack were organized to move along the two principal streets leading from one position in direction of the great Plaza, composed of light troops slightly extended, with orders to mask the men whenever practicable; avoid those points swept by the enemy's artillery; to press on to the first Plaza *Capilla*; to get hold of the end of streets beyond; then enter the buildings, and by

means of picks and bars, break through the longitudinal section of the walls; work from house to house, and ascending the roofs, to place themselves upon the same breast-height with the enemy. Light artillery, by sections, and pieces under Duncan, Roland, Mackall, Martin, Hays, Irons, Clarke, and Curd, followed at suitable intervals, covered by reserves to guard the pieces, and the whole operation against the probable enterprizes of cavalry upon our left. This was effectually done by seizing and commanding the head of every cross street. The streets were, at different and well chosen points, barricaded by heavy masonry walls, with embrasures for one or more guns, and in every instance well supported by cross batteries. These arrangements of defence gave to the operations at this moment a complicated character, demanding much care and precaution; but the work went on steadily, simultaneously, and successfully. About the time Worth's assault commenced, the fire ceased from Taylor's force in the opposite quarter. Disengaged on the one side, the enemy was enabled to shift men and guns to Worth's quarters, as was soon manifested by accumulation of fire. At dark his command had worked through the walls and squares, and reached to within one block of the great Plaza, leaving a covered way in its rear; carried a large building which towered over the principal defences, and during the night and ensuing morning crowned the roof with two howitzers and a six-pounder. As the columns of attack were moving from the Palace hill, Major Munroe, chief of artillery, arrived with a ten-inch mortar, which was immediately advanced to the Plaza *Chapel*, put in position, masked by the church wall, its bed adjusted as rapidly as possible, and by sunset opened upon the great square. At this period, our troops had worked to within one square of the Plaza. The exact position of their comrades on the opposite side was not known, and the distance of the position to be assailed from the bomb battery but conjectural: eight hundred yards was assumed, and fuze and charge regulated accordingly. The first shell fell a little short of the point on which it was directed, and beside our troops. A slight in-



crease of the projecting charge gave exact results. The whole service was managed by Major Munroe most admirably; and, combined with other operations, exercised a decided influence upon the final results. Early on the morning of the 23d, Major Brown, artillery battalion, was despatched with a select command, and one section of Mackall's battery, under Lieutenant Irons, to occupy a stone mill and adjacent grounds, constituting one league in advance the narrow gorge, near Sta. Catarina. The Major took possession, repulsed the enemy's picquets, and was preparing his command to resist any attack, when he received orders to retrace his steps, enter the city, and form the main reserve to the assaulting columns. He came up in good time and good order, and was at once under fire.

It has been seen that Generals Taylor and Worth were thus advancing close to the centre of the town from opposite directions. General Taylor, after withdrawing his troops from their advanced position near the Grand Plaza, as has been stated, returned to his camp, and there, in the evening, learned for the first time the extent of Worth's success in the town prior to that hour. He deemed it too late then to change his own dispositions; and receiving a note near midnight from General Worth, stating his further progress, and the position of his mortar battery, he requested that officer to await his co-operation for further movements. Meanwhile General Worth had received from the enemy a flag of truce, asking a brief suspension of his fire. Thus concluded the four days' action against Monterey, in the entreaty of its defenders for a capitulation. No previous achievement in the history of American arms affords a more splendid illustration of the heroism of the American character.

Before proceeding to give further details of the siege, or comments upon the result of it, the following despatches of General Taylor are presented, to complete the chain of the narrative. It is unnecessary to introduce his brief accounts of the affairs of the 21st, 22d, and 23d, written on those days respectively, as the detailed report, dated the 9th of October, and annexed, covers the whole ground.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camp before Monterey, September 25, 1846.

SIR: At noon on the 23d instant, while our troops were closely engaged in the lower part of the city, as reported in my last despatch, I received, by a flag, a communication from the Governor of the State of New Leon, which is herewith enclosed, (No. 1.) To this communication I deemed it my duty to return an answer declining to allow the inhabitants to leave the city. By 11 o'clock, P. M., the 2d division, which had entered the town from the direction of the Bishop's Palace, had advanced within one square of the principal Plaza, and occupied the city up to that point. The mortar had, in the mean time, been placed in battery in the cemetery, within good range of the heart of the town, and was served throughout the night with good effect.

Early in the morning of the 24th, I received a flag from the town, bearing a communication from General Ampudia, which I enclose, (No. 2,) and to which I returned the answer, (No. 3.) I also arranged with the bearer of the flag a cessation of fire until 12 o'clock, which hour I appointed to receive the final answer of General Ampudia at General Worth's headquarters. Before the appointed time, however, General Ampudia had signified to General Worth his desire for a personal interview with me, for the purpose of making some definitive arrangement. An interview was accordingly appointed for one o'clock, and resulted in the naming of a commission to draw up articles of agreement regulating the withdrawal of the Mexican forces, and a temporary cessation of hostilities. The commissioners named by the Mexican general-in-chief were Generals Ortega and Raquena, and Manl. M. Llano, governor of New Leon. Those named on the American side were General Worth, General Henderson, Governor of Texas, and Colonel Davis, Mississippi volunteers. The commission finally settled upon the articles, of which I enclose a copy, (No. 4,) the duplicates of which (in Spanish and English) have been duly signed. Agreeably to the provisions of the 4th article, our troops have this morning occupied the citadel.

It will be seen that the terms granted the Mexican garrison are less rigorous than those first imposed. The gallant defence of the town, and the fact of a recent change of government in Mexico, believed to be favourable to the interests of peace, induced me to concur with the commission in these terms, which will, I trust, receive the approval of the government. The latter consideration also prompted the convention for a temporary cessation of hostilities. Though scarcely warranted by my instructions, yet the change of affairs since those instructions were issued seemed to warrant this course. I beg to be advised, as early as practicable, whether I have met the views of the government in these particulars.

I regret to report that Captain Williams, topographical engineers, and Lieut. Terrett, 1st infantry, have died of the wounds received in the engagement of the 21st. Captain Gathir, 7th infantry, was wounded (not badly) on the 23d.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Maj: Gen. U. S. Army, commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

Head-Quarters, Monterey.

September 23, 1846, at 9 o'clock at night.

GENERAL: As I have made all the defence of which I believe this city capable, I have fulfilled my obligation, and done all required by that military honour which, to a certain degree, is common to all the armies of the civilized world; and, as a continuation of the defence would only bring upon the population distresses to which they have already been sufficiently subjected by the evils consequent upon war, and believing that the American government will appreciate these sentiments, I propose to your excellency to evacuate the city and citadel, taking with me the personnel and materiel of war which is left, and under the assurance that no prosecution shall be undertaken against the citizens who have taken part in the defence.



240 TAYLOR'S ANSWER TO AMPUDIA.

Be pleased to accept the assurance of my most distinguished consideration.

PEDRO DE AMPUDIA.

SEÑOR DON Z. TAYLOR,  
General-in-chief of the American Army.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camp before Monterey, September 24, 1846, 7 o'clock, A. M.

SIR: Your communication, bearing date at 9 o'clock, P. M. on the 23d, has just been received by the hands of Colonel Moreno.

In answer to your proposition to evacuate the city and fort, with all the personnel and materiel of war, I have to state that my duty compels me to decline acceding to it. A complete surrender of the town and garrison, the latter as prisoners of war, is now demanded. But such surrender will be upon terms; and the gallant defence of the place, creditable alike to the Mexican troops and nation, will prompt me to make those terms as liberal as possible. The garrison will be allowed, at your option, after laying down its arms, to retire to the interior, on condition of not serving again during the war, or until regularly exchanged. I need hardly say that the rights of non-combatants will be respected.

An answer to this communication is required by 12 o'clock. If you assent to an accommodation, an officer will be despatched at once, under instructions to arrange the conditions.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

SEÑOR DON PEDRO DE AMPUDIA,  
General-in-chief, Monterey.

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GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF NEW LEON.

Your excellency having resolved to occupy this place by force of arms, and the Mexican general-in-chief to defend it

at any cost, as required by his honour and duty, thousands of victims, who, from their poverty and want of means, find themselves still upon the theatre of war, and who would be uselessly sacrificed, claim the rights which in all times and in all countries humanity holds sacred.

As Governor of this State, and as the legitimate representative of the people thereof, I now address your excellency; and I hope, from your regard to humanity, and from your sense of the rules which govern civilized nations, that whatever may be the result of the present struggle, you will give orders that the resident families shall be respected, or will concede a sufficient time for them to remove from this capital.

I have the honour to salute your excellency, general-in-chief of the army of occupation of the United States, and to assure you of my highest consideration.

God and liberty! Monterey, September 23, 1846, 8 o'clock in the morning.

FRANCISCO DE P. MORALES.

To the General-in-chief of the  
Army of Occupation of the United States.

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Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camp near Monterey, Oct. 9, 1846.

SIR: I have now the honour to submit a detailed report of the recent operations before Monterey, resulting in the capitulation of that city.

The information received on the route from Seralvo, and particularly the continual appearance in our front of the Mexican cavalry, which had a slight skirmish with our advance at the village of Ramas, induced the belief, as we approached Monterey, that the enemy would defend that place. Upon reaching the neighbourhood of the city, on the morning of the 19th of September, this belief was fully confirmed. It was ascertained that he occupied the town in force; that a large work had been constructed commanding all the northern approaches; and that the Bishop's Palace, and some heights in its vicinity near the Saltillo road, had also been fortified and occupied.

with troops and artillery. It was known, from information previously received, that the eastern approaches were commanded by several small works in the lower edge of the city.

The configuration of the heights and gorges in the direction of the Saltillo road, as visible from the point attained by our advance on the morning of the 19th, led me to suspect that it was practicable to turn all the works in that direction, and thus cut the enemy's line of communication. After establishing my camp at the "Walnut Springs," three miles from Monterey, the nearest suitable position, it was, accordingly, my first care to order a close reconnoissance of the ground in question, which was executed on the evening of the 19th by the engineer officers, under the direction of Major Mansfield. A reconnoissance of the eastern approaches was at the same time made by Captain Williams, topographical engineer. The examination made by Major Mansfield proved the entire practicability of throwing forward a column to the Saltillo road, and thus turning the position of the enemy. Deeming this to be an operation of essential importance, orders were given to Brevet Brig. Gen. Worth, commanding the second division, to march with his command on the 20th; to turn the hill of the Bishop's Palace; to occupy a position on the Saltillo road, and to carry the enemy's detached works in that quarter, where practicable. The first regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, under command of Col. Hays, was associated with the second division on this service. Capt. Sanders, engineers, and Lieut. Meade, topographical engineers, were also ordered to report to Gen. Worth for duty with his column.

At 2 o'clock, P. M., on the 20th, the second division took up its march. It was soon discovered, by officers who were reconnoitring the town, and communicated to Gen. Worth, that its movement had been perceived, and that the enemy was throwing reinforcements towards the Bishop's Palace and the height which commands it. To divert his attention as far as practicable, the first division, under Brigadier General Twiggs, and field division of volunteers, under Major General Butler, were displayed in front of the town until dark. Arrange-



ments were made at the same time to place in battery during the night, at a suitable distance from the enemy's main work, the citadel, two twenty-four-pounder howitzers, and a ten-inch mortar, with a view to open a fire on the following day, when I proposed to make a diversion in favour of General Worth's movement. The 4th infantry covered this battery during the night. Gen. Worth had, in the mean time, reached and occupied for the night a defensive position just without range of a battery above the Bishop's Palace, having made a reconnoissance as far as the Saltillo road.

Before proceeding to report the operations of the 21st and following days, I beg leave to state that I shall mention in detail only those which were conducted against the eastern extremity of the city, or elsewhere, under my immediate direction, referring you for the particulars of Gen. Worth's operations, which were entirely detached, to his own full report transmitted herewith.

Early on the morning of the 21st, I received a note from General Worth, written at half-past 9 o'clock the night before, suggesting what I had already intended, a strong diversion against the centre and left of the town to favour his enterprize against the heights in rear. The infantry and artillery of the first division, and the field division of volunteers, were ordered under arms and took the direction of the city, leaving one company of each regiment as a camp guard. The 2d dragoons, under Lieut. Col. May, and Col. Wood's regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, under the immediate direction of General Henderson, were directed to the right to support Gen. Worth, if necessary, and to make an impression, if practicable, upon the upper quarter of the city. Upon approaching the mortar battery, the 1st and 3d regiments of infantry and battalion of Baltimore and Washington volunteers, with Captain Bragg's field battery—the whole under the command of Lieut. Col. Garland—were directed towards the lower part of the town, with orders to make a strong demonstration, and carry one of the enemy's advanced works, if it could be done without too heavy loss. Major Mansfield, engineers, and Captain

Williams and Lieut. Pope, topographical engineers, accompanied this column, Major Mansfield being charged with its direction, and the designation of points of attack. In the mean time the mortar, served by Capt. Ramsay, of the ordnance, and the howitzer battery under Capt. Webster, 1st artillery, had opened their fire upon the citadel, which was deliberately sustained, and answered from the work. Gen. Butler's division had now taken up a position in rear of this battery, when the discharges of artillery, mingled finally with a rapid fire of small arms, showed that Lieut. Garland's command had become warmly engaged. I now deemed it necessary to support this attack, and accordingly ordered the 4th infantry and three regiments of General Butler's division to march at once by the left flank in the direction of the advanced work at the lower extremity of the town, leaving one regiment (1st Kentucky) to cover the mortar and howitzer battery. By some mistake two companies of the 4th infantry did not receive this order, and consequently did not join the advance companies until some time afterwards.

Lieut. Col. Garland's command had approached the town in a direction to the right of the advanced work (No. 1.) at the north-eastern angle of the city, and the engineer officer, covered by skirmishers, had succeeded in entering the suburbs and gaining cover. The remainder of this command now advanced and entered the town under a heavy fire of artillery from the citadel and the works on the left, and of musketry from the houses and small works in front. A movement to the right was attempted with a view to gain the rear of No. 1, and carry that work, but the troops were so much exposed to a fire which they could not effectually return, and had already sustained such severe loss, particularly in officers, that it was deemed best to withdraw them to a more secure position. Captain Backus, 1st infantry, however, with a portion of his own and other companies, had gained the roof of a tannery, which looked directly into the gorge of No. 1, and from which he poured a most destructive fire into that work and upon the strong building in its rear. This fire happily coincided in point

of time with the advance of a portion of the volunteer division upon No. 1, and contributed largely to the fall of that strong and important work.

The three regiments of the volunteer division, under the immediate command of Major General Butler, had in the mean time advanced in the direction of No. 1. The leading brigade, under Brigadier General Quitman, continued its advance upon that work, preceded by three companies of the 4th infantry, while General Butler, with the first Ohio regiment, entered the town to the right. The companies of the 4th infantry had advanced within short range of the work, when they were received by a fire that almost, in one moment, struck down one-third of the officers and men, and rendered it necessary to retire and effect a conjunction with the two other companies then advancing. General Quitman's brigade, though suffering most severely, particularly in the Tennessee regiment, continued its advance, and finally carried the work in handsome style, as well as the strong building in its rear. Five pieces of artillery, a considerable supply of ammunition, and thirty prisoners, including three officers, fell into their hands. Major General Butler, with the 1st Ohio regiment, after entering the edge of the town, discovered that nothing was to be accomplished in his front, and at this point, yielding to the suggestions of several officers, I ordered a retrograde movement; but learning almost immediately, from one of my staff, that the battery No. 1. was in our possession, the order was countermanded; and I determined to hold the battery and defences already gained. General Butler with the 1st Ohio regiment, then entered the town at a point farther to the left, and marched in the direction of the battery No. 2. While making an examination, with a view to ascertain the possibility of carrying this second work by storm, the general was wounded and soon after compelled to quit the field. As the strength of No. 2, and the heavy musketry fire flanking the approach, rendered it impossible to carry it without great loss, the 1st Ohio regiment was withdrawn from the town.

Fragments of the various regiments engaged were now under



cover of the captured battery, and some buildings in its front, and on the right. The field batteries of Captains Bragg and Ridgely were also partially covered by the battery. An incessant fire was kept up on this position from battery No. 2, and other works on its right, and from the citadel on all our approaches. General Twiggs, though quite unwell, joined me at this point, and was instrumental in causing the artillery captured from the enemy to be placed in battery, and served by Captain Ridgely against No. 2, until the arrival of Captain Webster's howitzer battery, which took its place. In the mean time, I directed such men as could be collected of the 1st, 3d, and 4th regiments, and Baltimore battalion, to enter the town, penetrating to the right, and carry the 2d battery if possible. This command, under Lieut. Col. Garland, advanced beyond the bridge "Purissima," when, finding it impracticable to gain the rear of the 2d battery, a portion of it sustained themselves for some time in that advanced position; but as no permanent impression could be made at that point, and the main object of the general operation had been effected, the command, including a section of Captain Ridgely's battery, which had joined it, was withdrawn to battery No. 1. During the absence of this column, a demonstration of cavalry was reported in the direction of the citadel. Captain Bragg, who was at hand, immediately galloped with his battery to a suitable position, from which a few discharges effectually dispersed the enemy. Captain Miller, 1st Infantry, was despatched with a mixed command to support the battery on this service. The enemy's lancers had previously charged upon the Ohio and a part of the Mississippi regiment, near some fields at a distance from the edge of the town, and had been repulsed with a considerable loss. A demonstration of cavalry on the opposite side of the river was also dispersed in the course of the afternoon by Captain Ridgely's battery, and the squadrons returned to the city. At the approach of evening, all the troops that had been engaged were ordered back to camp, except Captain Ridgely's battery, and the regular infantry of the first division, who were detailed as a guard for the works during the night, under com-

mand of Lieut. Col. Garland. One battalion of the 1st Kentucky regiment was ordered to reinforce this command. Intrenching tools were procured, and additional strength was given to the works, and protection to the men, by working parties during the night, under the direction of Lieut. Scarritt, engineers.

The main object proposed in the morning had been effected. A powerful diversion had been made to favour the operations of the 2d division, one of the enemy's advanced works had been carried, and we now had a strong foot-hold in the town. But this had not been accomplished without a heavy loss, embracing some of our gallant and promising officers. Captain Williams, topographical engineers, Lieuts. Terrett and Dilworth, 1st infantry, Lieut. Woods, 2d infantry, Capts. Morris and Field, Bvt. Major Barbour, Lieuts. Irwin and Hazlett, 3d infantry, Lieut. Hoskins, 4th infantry, Lieut. Col. Watson, Baltimore battalion, Capt. Allen and Lieut. Putman, Tennessee regiment, and Lieut. Hett, Ohio regiment, were killed, or have since died of wounds received in this engagement, while the number and rank of the officers wounded gives additional proof of the obstinacy of the contest, and the good conduct of our troops. The number of killed and wounded incident to the operations in the lower part of the city on the 21st is 394.

Early in the morning of this day, (21st,) the advance of the 2d division had encountered the enemy in force, and after a brief but sharp conflict, repulsed him with heavy loss. Gen. Worth then succeeded in gaining a position on the Saltillo road, thus cutting the enemy's line of communication. From this position the two heights south of the Saltillo road were carried in succession, and the gun taken in one of them turned upon the Bishop's Palace. These important successes were fortunately obtained with comparatively small loss; Captain McKavett, 8th infantry, being the only officer killed.

The 22d day of September passed without any active operations in the lower part of the city. The citadel and other works continued to fire at parties exposed to their range, and at the work now occupied by our troops. The guard left in it

the preceding night, except Capt. Ridgely's company, was relieved at mid-day by Gen. Quitman's brigade, Capt. Bragg's battery was thrown under cover in front of the town to repel any demonstration of cavalry in that quarter. At dawn of day, the height above the Bishop's Palace was carried, and soon after meridian, the Palace itself was taken and its guns turned upon the fugitive garrison. The object for which the 2d division was detached had thus been completely accomplished, and I felt confident that with a strong force occupying the road and heights in his rear, and a good position below the city in our possession, the enemy could not possibly maintain the town.

During the night of the 22d, the enemy evacuated nearly all his defences in the lower part of the city. This was reported to me early in the morning of the 23d by Gen. Quitman, who had already meditated an assault upon those works. I immediately sent instructions to that officer, leaving it to his discretion to enter the city, covering his men by the houses and walls, and advance carefully as far as he might deem prudent. After ordering the remainder of the troops as a reserve, under the orders of Brigadier General Twiggs, I repaired to the abandoned works, and discovered that a portion of Gen. Quitman's brigade had entered the town, and were successfully forcing their way towards the principal plaza. I then ordered up the 2d regiment of Texas mounted volunteers, who entered the city, dismounted, and, under the immediate orders of Gen. Henderson, co-operated with Gen. Quitman's brigade. Capt. Bragg's battery was also ordered up, supported by the 3d infantry; and after firing for some time at the cathedral, a portion of it was likewise thrown into the city. Our troops advanced from house to house, and from square to square, until they reached a street but one square in rear of the principal plaza, in and near which the enemy's force was mainly concentrated. This advance was conducted vigorously but with due caution, and although destructive to the enemy, was attended with but small loss on our part. Captain Ridgely, in the mean time, had served a captured piece in battery No. 1, against the city, until the advance of our men rendered it imprudent to fire



in the direction of the Cathedral. I was now satisfied that we could operate successfully in the city, and that the enemy had retired from the lower portion of it to make a stand behind his barricades. As Gen. Quitman's brigade had been on duty the previous night, I determined to withdraw the troops to the evacuated works, and concert with Gen. Worth a combined attack upon the town. The troops accordingly fell back deliberately, in good order, and resumed their original positions, General Quitman's brigade being relieved after nightfall by that of General Hamer. On my return to camp, I met an officer with the intelligence that General Worth, induced by the firing in the lower part of the city, was about making an attack at the upper extremity, which had also been evacuated by the enemy to a considerable distance. I regretted that this information had not reached me before leaving the city, but still deemed it inexpedient to change my orders, and accordingly returned to the camp. A note from Gen. Worth, written at eleven o'clock, P. M., informed me that he had advanced to within a short distance of the principal plaza, and that the mortar (which had been sent to his division in the morning) was doing good execution within effective range of the enemy's position.

Desiring to make no further attempt upon the city without complete concert as to the lines and mode of approach, I instructed that officer to suspend his advance until I could have an interview with him on the following morning at his headquarters.

Early on the morning of the 24th, I received, through Colonel Moreno, a communication from General Ampudia, proposing to evacuate the town; which, with the answer, were forwarded with my first despatch. I arranged with Colonel Moreno a cessation of fire until twelve o'clock, at which hour I would receive the answer of the Mexican general at General Worth's headquarters, to which I soon repaired. In the meantime, General Ampudia had signified to General Worth his desire for a personal interview with me, to which I acceded, and which finally resulted in a capitulation, placing the town

and the material of war, with certain exceptions, in our possession. A copy of that capitulation was transmitted with my first despatch.

Upon occupying the city, it was discovered to be of great strength in itself, and to have its approaches carefully and strongly fortified. The town and works were armed with forty-two pieces of cannon, well supplied with ammunition, and manned with a force of at least 7000 troops of the line, and from 2000 to 3000 irregulars. The force under my orders before Monterey, as exhibited by the accompanying return, was 425 officers, and 6220 men. Our artillery consisted of one ten-inch mortar, two twenty-four-pounder howitzers, and four light field batteries of four guns each—the mortar being the only piece suitable to the operations of a siege.

Our loss is twelve officers and one hundred and eight men killed; thirty-one officers and three hundred and thirty-seven men wounded. That of the enemy is not known, but is believed considerably to exceed our own.

I take pleasure in bringing to the notice of the government the good conduct of the troops, both regulars and volunteers, which has been conspicuous throughout the operations. I am proud to bear testimony to their coolness and constancy in battle, and the cheerfulness with which they have submitted to exposure and privation. To the general officers commanding divisions—Major Generals Butler and Henderson, and Brigadier Generals Twiggs and Worth—I must express my obligations for the efficient aid which they have rendered in their respective commands. I was unfortunately deprived, early on the 21st, of the valuable services of Major General Butler, who was disabled by a wound received in the attack on the city. Major General Henderson, commanding the Texan volunteers, has given me important aid in the organization of the command, and its subsequent operations. Brigadier General Twiggs rendered important services with his division, and as the second in command after Major General Butler was disabled. brigadier General Worth was intrusted with an important detachment which rendered his operations independent of my

own. These operations were conducted with ability, and crowned with complete success.

I desire also to notice Brigadier Generals Hamer and Quitman, commanding brigades in General Butler's Division. Lieutenant Colonels Garland and Wilson, commanding brigades in General Twiggs' Division. Colonels Mitchell, Campbell, Davis and Wood, commanding the Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, and 2d Texas regiments, respectively, and Majors Lear, Allen, and Abercrombie, commanding the 3d, 4th, and 1st regiments of infantry; all of whom served under my eye, and conducted their commands with coolness and gallantry against the enemy. Colonel Mitchell, Lieut. Col. McClung, Mississippi regiment, Major Lear, 3d infantry, and Major Alexander, Tennessee regiment, were all severely wounded, as were Captain Lamotte, 1st infantry, Lieut. Graham, 4th infantry, Adjutant Armstrong, Ohio regiment, Lieutenants Scudder and Allen, Tennessee regiment, and Lieut. Howard, Mississippi regiment, while leading their men against the enemy's position, on the 21st and 23d. After the fall of Col. Mitchell, the command of the 1st Ohio regiment devolved upon Lieut. Col. Weller; that of the 3d infantry, after the fall of Major Lear, devolved in succession upon Capt. Bainbridge and Capt. Henry, the former being also wounded. The following named officers have been favourably noticed by their commanders: Lieut. Col. Anderson, and Adjutant Heiman, Tennessee regiment; Lieut. Col. McClung, Captains Cooper and Downing, Lieutenants Patterson, Calhoun, Moore, Russell, and Cook, Mississippi regiment; also Serjeant Major Hearlan, Mississippi regiment, and Major Price, and Capt. J. Smith, unattached, but serving with it. I beg leave also to call attention to the good conduct of Captain Johnston, Ohio regiment, and Lieut. Hooker, 1st artillery, serving on the staff of Gen. Hamer, and of Lieutenant Nichols, 2d artillery, on that of General Quitman. Captains Bragg and Ridgely served with their batteries during the operations under my own observation, and in part under my immediate orders, and exhibited distinguished skill and gallantry. Captain Webster, 1st artillery, assisted by Lieutenants Donaldson and Bo-



wen, rendered good service with the howitzer battery, which was much exposed to the enemy's fire on the 21st.

From the nature of the operations, the 2d dragoons were not brought into action, but were usefully employed, under the direction of Lieut. Col. May, as escorts, and in keeping open our communications. The 1st Kentucky regiment was also prevented from participating in the action of the 21st, but rendered highly important services under Col. Ormsby, in covering the mortar battery, and holding in check the enemy's cavalry during the day.

I have noticed above, the officers whose conduct either fell under my immediate eye, or is noticed only in minor reports which are not forwarded. For further mention of individuals, I beg leave to refer to the reports of division commanders herewith respectfully transmitted. I fully concur in their recommendations, and desire that they be considered as a part of my own report.

From the officers of my personal staff, and of the engineers, topographical engineers, and ordnance, associated with me, I have derived valuable and efficient assistance during the operations. Col. Whiting, assistant quartermaster general, Colonels Croghan and Belknap, inspector generals, Major Bliss, assistant adjutant general, Captain Sibley, assistant quartermaster, Captain Waggaman, commissary of subsistence, Captain Eaton and Lieut. Garnett, aids-de-camp, and Major Kirby and Van Buren, pay department, served near my person, and were ever prompt, in all situations, in the communication of my orders and instructions. I must express my particular obligations to Brevet Major Mansfield and Lieut. Scarritt, corps of engineers. They both rendered most important services in reconnoitring the enemy's positions, conducting troops in attack, and strengthening the works captured from the enemy. Major Mansfield, though wounded on the 21st, remained on duty during that and the following day, until confined by his wound to camp. Capt. Williams, topographical engineers, to my great regret and the loss of the service, was mortally wounded while fearlessly exposing himself in the attack of the 21st.

Lieut. Pope, of the same corps, was active and zealous throughout the operations. Major Munroe, chief of the artillery, Major Craig and Capt. Ramsay, of the ordnance, were assiduous in the performance of their proper duties. The former superintended their mortar service on the 22d, as particularly mentioned in the report of Gen. Worth, to which I also refer for the services of the engineer and topographical officers detached with the second division.

Surgeon Craig, medical director, was actively employed in the important duties of his department, and the medical staff generally were unremitting in their attention to the numerous wounded—their duties with the regular regiments being rendered uncommonly arduous by the small number serving in the field.

I respectfully enclose herewith, in addition to the reports of division commanders, a field return of the force before Monterey on the 21st of September—a return of killed, wounded, and missing during the operations—and two topographical sketches—one exhibiting all the movements around Monterey—the other on a large scale illustrating more particularly the operations in the lower quarter of the city—prepared respectively by Lieutenants Meade and Pope, topographical engineers.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C.

In justice to the gallant officers and corps of General Worth's Division, the annexed extract from his report of his operations is given, in connection with that of the commander-in-chief.

“When every officer and every soldier, regular and volunteer, has, through a series of harassing and severe conflicts, in the valley and on the mountain, in the street and on the house-top, cheerfully, bravely, and successfully executed every service, and complied with every exaction of valour and patriotism, the task is as difficult as delicate to distinguish individuals;

and yet it will always happen, as it has always happened, in the varied scenes of battle and siege, that fortune presents to some those opportunities which all would have seized with gladness and avidity. It is my pleasing and grateful duty to present to the consideration of the general-in-chief, and through him to the government, the distinguished conduct of Brigadier General Smith, (colonel of rifles;) Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Childs, artillery battalion; Colonel Hays, Texan riflemen; Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, horse artillery; and Captain C. F. Smith, 2d artillery, commanding light troops 1st brigade.

“My thanks are also especially due to Lieutenant Colonel Staniford, 8th, (commanding 1st brigade;) Major Munroe, chief of artillery, (general staff;) Brevet Major Brown and Captain J. R. Vinton, artillery battalion; Captain J. B. Scott, artillery battalion, (light troops;) Major Scott, commanding, and Captain Merrill, 5th; Captains Miles, (commanding,) Holmes, and Ross, 7th infantry, and Captain Screvin, commanding 8th infantry; to Lieutenant Colonel Walker, (captain of rifles;) Major Chevalier and Captain McCulloch, of the Texan, and Captain Blanchard, of the Louisiana volunteers; to Lieutenants Mackall, (commanding battery,) Roland, Martin, Hays, Irons, Clarke, and Curd, horse artillery; Lieutenant Longstreet, commanding light company 8th; Lieutenant Ayres, artillery battalion, who was among the first in the assault upon the palace, and who secured the colours. Each of the officers named either headed special detachments, columns of attack, storming parties, or detached guns; and all were conspicuous for conduct and courage. My attention has been particularly directed, by General Smith, to the gallant conduct of Lieutenant Gardner, 7th infantry, during the assault upon the city; on which occasion he threw himself in advance, and on the most exposed points, animating the men by his brave example. Particular attention has also been called to the Lieutenants Nicholls, (brothers,) Louisiana volunteers, as having highly distinguished themselves by personal daring and efficient service. The officers of brigade and regimental staff were conspicuous in the field, or in their particular departments. Lieutenants Hanson,



(commanding,) Vandorn, (aid-de-camp 7th;) Lieutenant Robinson, 5th, (quartermaster's department,) on the staff of General Smith; Lieutenant and Adjutant Clarke, 8th infantry, staff 1st brigade; Lieutenants Benjamin, adjutant artillery battalion; Peck, ordnance office, artillery battalion; G. Deas, adjutant 5th, and Page, adjutant 7th infantry, are highly commended by their respective chiefs; to the justness of which I have the pleasure to add my personal observation. In common with the entire division, my particular thanks are tendered to Assistant Surgeons Porter, (senior,) Byrne, Conrad, De Leon, and Roberts, (medical department,) who were ever at hand, in the close fight, promptly administering to the wounded and suffering soldier. To the officers of the staff, general and personal, more especially associated with myself—honourable Colonel Balie Peyton, Louisiana troops, who did me the honour to serve as aid-de-camp; Captain Sanders, military engineers; Lieutenant Meade, topographical engineers; Lieutenants E. Deas, Daniels, and Ripley, quartermaster's and commissary's staff, and Lieutenants Pemberton, 4th artillery, and Wood, 8th infantry, my aids-de-camp—I have to express the greatest obligation. In such diversified operations, during the three days and nights, they were constantly in motion, performing every executive duty with zeal and intelligence, only surpassed by daring and courage in conflict. I beg to commend each to special consideration.

“We have to lament the gallant Captains McKavett, 8th infantry, an officer of high merit, killed on the 21st, and Gillespie, Texas volunteers, on the 22d. The latter eminently distinguished himself, while leading his brave company at the storming of the first height, and perished in seeking similar distinction on a second occasion. Captain Gatlin and Lieutenant Potter, 7th, Lieutenant Russell, 5th, and Wainwright, 8th infantry, and Lieutenant Reece, Texas riflemen, received honourable (happily not mortal) wounds. Annexed is an accurate topographical sketch of the theatre of operations; for which I am indebted, as in many other respects, to the intelligent zeal and gallantry of Lieutenant Meade, engineers.

“The following non-commissioned officers are reported as having highly distinguished themselves: Serjeants Hazard, 4th, and Dilworth, 3d artillery; Quartermaster Serjeant Henry, 7th infantry; Cross, company C.; Rounds, Bradford, (colour serjeant,) and Wragg, company E.; Bailey, company D.; and Ballard, 7th infantry.”

Where few, if any, were found wanting, in the protracted, arduous, and singularly dangerous duty imposed on the troops who stormed Monterey, it is not possible, however grateful the task, to do historical justice to each individual. The reports of the commanders, already quoted, must therefore close the notice of personal merit, which shone forth on that memorable occasion—memorable not only in the annals of America, but in the records of modern warfare. A town, situated where nature pointed out security, protected on two sides by mountains, and on two others by a continuous series of fortresses; every house constructed as if defiance to enemies rather than shelter to friends had been intended; every street walled up with immovable barriers; heavy ordnance on every commanding elevation, and twelve thousand men in arms to defend every accessible point; a town thus built and thus fortified, was in three days entered and possessed by six thousand assailants, two-thirds of them unused not only to battle, but even to the ordinary hardships of military life. Commentary cannot magnify the lustre of such an achievement. If it is right and reasonable to applaud actions, involving of necessity the infliction of misery and the sacrifice of life, the capture of Monterey is one to command unqualified admiration.

When General Ampudia's desire for a temporary cessation of the assault had been assented to, General Taylor, accompanied by several officers, met him on the 24th of September, at a house designated for a conference. The Mexican commander there stated officially, that commissioners of the United States, appointed to treat with Mexico respecting the terms of a peace, had been received by the government of the latter country; and further, that a change in that government having taken place, the orders under which he defended Monterey

were no longer virtual. Under these circumstances he professed to desire the conference. A conversation between him and General Taylor ensued, when it was discovered that the views of Ampudia were wholly inadmissible, and that no settlement could probably be made without a further appeal to arms.

At this stage of the proceedings, it was suggested on the part of Ampudia's friends, that a mixed commission should be appointed to consider the terms of capitulation; which being acceded to, General Taylor appointed General Worth, General J. P. Henderson, and Colonel Jefferson Davis, on his behalf; and General Ampudia appointed General J. Ma. Ortega, General P. Raguena, and Senor M. Ma. Llano, the governor of the city. The instructions of General Taylor to the United States' commissioners were embodied by them in the following articles:

*Copy of demand by the United States' Commissioners.*

"I. As the legitimate result of the operations before this place, and the present position of the contending armies, we demand the surrender of the town, the arms and munitions of war, and all other public property within the place.

"II. That the Mexican armed force retire beyond the Rinconada, Linares, and San Fernando, on the coast.

"III. The commanding general of the army of the United States agrees that the Mexican officers reserve their side arms and private baggage; and the troops be allowed to retire under their officers without parole, a reasonable time being allowed to withdraw the forces.

"IV. The immediate delivery of the main work, now occupied, to the army of the United States.

"V. To avoid collisions, and for mutual convenience, that the troops of the United States shall not occupy the town until the Mexican forces have been withdrawn, except for hospital purposes, store-houses, &c.

"VI. The commanding general of the United States agrees not to advance beyond the line specified in the second section



before the expiration of eight weeks, or until the respective governments can be heard from."

The subsequent proceedings of the commissioners are quoted from the minutes of them, made, and afterwards published by Colonel Davis, one of the commissioners. He says:—

"The terms of the demand were refused by the Mexican commissioners, who drew up a counter proposition, of which I only recollect that it contained a permission to the Mexican forces to retire with their arms. This was urged as a matter of soldierly pride, and as an ordinary courtesy. We had reached the limit of our instructions, and the commission rose to report the disagreement.

"Upon returning to the reception room, after the fact had been announced that the commissioners could not agree upon terms, General Ampudia entered at length upon the question, treating the point of disagreement as one which involved the honour of his country, spoke of his desire for a settlement without further bloodshed, and said he did not care about the pieces of artillery which he had at the place. General Taylor responded to the wish to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. It was agreed the commission should reassemble, and we were instructed to concede the small arms; and I supposed there would be no question about the artillery. The Mexican commissioners now urged that, as all other arms had been recognised, it would be discreditable to the artillery if required to march out without any thing to represent their arm, and stated, in answer to an inquiry, that they had a battery of light artillery, manœuvred and equipped as such. The commission again rose, and reported the disagreement on the point of artillery.

"General Taylor hearing that more was demanded than the middle ground, upon which, in a spirit of generosity, he had agreed to place the capitulation; announced the conference at an end; and rose in a manner which showed his determination to talk no more. As he crossed the room to leave it, one of the Mexican commissioners addressed him, and some con-

versation which I did not hear ensued. General Worth asked permission of General Taylor, and addressed some remarks to General Ampudia, the spirit of which was that he had manifested throughout the negotiation, viz: generosity and leniency, and a desire to spare the further effusion of blood. The commission reassembled, and the points of capitulation were agreed upon. After a short recess we again repaired to the room in which we had parted from the Mexican commissioners; they were tardy in joining us, and slow in executing the instrument of capitulation. The seventh, eighth, and ninth articles were added during this session. At a late hour the English original was handed to General Taylor for his examination; the Spanish original having been sent to General Ampudia. General Taylor signed and delivered to me the instrument as it was submitted to him, and I returned to receive the Spanish copy with the signature of General Ampudia, and send that having General Taylor's signature, that each general might counter-sign the original to be retained by the other. General Ampudia did not sign the instrument as was expected, but came himself to meet the commissioners. He raised many points which had been settled, and evinced a disposition to make the Spanish differ in essential points from the English instrument. General Worth was absent. Finally he was required to sign the instrument prepared for his own commissioners, and the English original was left with him that he might have it translated, (which he promised to do that night,) and be ready the next morning with a Spanish duplicate of the English instrument left with him. By this means the two instruments would be made to correspond, and he be compelled to admit his knowledge of the contents of the English original before he signed it.

“The next morning the commission again met, again the attempt was made, as had been often done before by solicitation, to gain some grant in addition to the compact. Thus we had, at their request, adopted the word *capitulation* in lieu of *surrender*; they now wished to substitute *stipulation* for *capitulation*. It finally became necessary to make a peremptory demand for the immediate signing of the English instrument by

General Ampudia, and the literal translation (now perfected) by the commissioners and their general. The Spanish instrument first signed by General Ampudia was destroyed in presence of his commissioners; the translation of our own instrument was countersigned by General Taylor, and delivered. The agreement was complete, and it only remained to execute the terms."

This agreement, signed by the commissioners, was in the following form:

Terms of capitulation of the city of Monterey, the capital of Nueva Leon, agreed upon by the undersigned commissioners, to wit: General Worth, of the United States army, General Henderson, of the Texas volunteers, and Colonel Davis, of the Mississippi riflemen, on the part of Major General Taylor, commanding-in-chief the United States forces; and General Requena, and General Ortega, of the army of Mexico, and Senor Manuel M. Llano, governor of Nueva Leon, on the part of Senor General Don Pedro Ampudia, commanding-in-chief the army of the north of Mexico.

ART. 1. As the legitimate result of the operations before this place, and the present position of the contending armies, it is agreed that the city, the fortifications, cannon, the munitions of war, and all other public property, with the under-mentioned exceptions, be surrendered to the commanding general of the United States forces now at Monterey.

ART. 2. That the Mexican forces be allowed to retain the following arms, to wit: the commissioned officers their side arms, the infantry their arms and accoutrements, the cavalry their arms and accoutrements, the artillery one field battery, not to exceed six pieces, with twenty-one rounds of ammunition.

ART. 3. That the Mexican armed forces retire within seven days from this date, beyond the line formed by the pass of the Rinconada, the city of Linares and San Fernando de Presas.

ART. 4. That the citadel at Monterey be evacuated by the Mexican, and occupied by the American forces, to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock.

ART. 5. To avoid collisions, and for mutual convenience,



that the troops of the United States will not occupy the city until the Mexican forces have withdrawn, except for hospital and storage purposes.

ART. 6. That the forces of the United States will not advance beyond the line specified in the 2d [3d] article, before the expiration of eight weeks, or until the orders or instructions of the respective governments can be received.

ART. 7. That the public property to be delivered shall be turned over and received by officers appointed by the commanding generals of the two armies.

ART. 8. That all doubts as to the meaning of any of the preceding articles shall be solved by an equitable construction, and on principles of liberality to the retiring army.

ART. 9. That the Mexican flag, when struck at the citadel, may be saluted by its own battery.

Done at Monterey, September 24, 1846.

These articles were signed by the commissioners already named.

As these terms gave rise to much comment at the time, and exposed General Taylor to reproach in certain quarters, the grounds on which he admitted them, seemingly too lenient to the enemy, will be considered in a future chapter. The evidence is conclusive that his justice, prudence, and humanity were, in this instance, worthy of his energy and courage.

In accordance with the terms of the capitulation, the Mexican army evacuated Monterey. The movement was made by divisions on the 26th, the 27th, and the 28th of September. Ampudia, in a Proclamation announcing the fact, stated that he had "suffered great scarcity of ammunition and provisions." The ammunition of all kinds, found by General Taylor in Monterey, was superabundant,—and the misrepresentation of the fact by Ampudia, proves not only his disregard of truth, but his recklessness of infamy.

The following is a recapitulation, from the official report, of the killed, wounded, and missing,—a sad proof of the cost of our triumph before Monterey.

KILLED AND WOUNDED AT THE SIEGE OF MONTEREY.

| DIVISIONS.                                      | KILLED.            |                    |                      |                      | WOUNDED.           |                    |                      |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                                                 | Officers—Regulars. | Privates—Regulars. | Officers—Volunteers. | Privates—Volunteers. | Officers—Regulars. | Privates—Regulars. | Officers—Volunteers. | Privates—Volunteers. |
| <b>GENERAL TWIGGS'.</b>                         |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      |                      |
| Second Regiment Dragoons                        | 2                  | 4                  | ..                   | ..                   | 2                  | 9                  | ..                   | ..                   |
| First Infantry                                  | 1                  | 14                 | ..                   | ..                   | 2                  | 27                 | ..                   | ..                   |
| Second Infantry                                 | 5                  | 14                 | ..                   | ..                   | 2                  | 31                 | ..                   | ..                   |
| Third Infantry                                  | 2                  | 11                 | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | 23                 | ..                   | ..                   |
| Fourth Infantry                                 | ..                 | 4                  | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | 9                  | ..                   | ..                   |
| Third Artillery                                 | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | 7                  | ..                   | ..                   |
| Light Artillery                                 | ..                 | ..                 | 1                    | 5                    | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 17                   |
| Baltimore Battalion                             | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 1                    | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | ..                   |
| Captain Shriver's Com-<br>pany of Texas Vol'rs. | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 1                    | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | ..                   |
| [Killed 63, wounded 127.]                       | 9                  | 47                 | 1                    | 6                    | 4                  | 106                | ..                   | 17                   |
| <b>GENERAL WORTH'S.</b>                         |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      |                      |
| Artillery                                       | 1                  | 8                  | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | 12                 | ..                   | ..                   |
| Fifth Infantry                                  | 2                  | 9                  | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | ..                   |
| Seventh Infantry                                | 1                  | 7                  | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | 1                  | ..                   | ..                   |
| Eighth Infantry                                 | 1                  | 1                  | ..                   | ..                   | 1                  | 6                  | ..                   | ..                   |
| Phoenix Company of Lou-<br>isiana Volunteers.   | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 2                    | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 4                    |
| Colonel Hays' Regiment<br>of Texas Volunteers.  | ..                 | ..                 | 1                    | 7                    | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 17                   |
| [Killed 39, wounded 41.]                        | 4                  | 25                 | 1                    | 9                    | 1                  | 19                 | ..                   | 21                   |
| <b>GENERAL BUTLER'S.</b>                        |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      |                      |
| General Commanding                              | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | ..                 | 1                    | ..                   |
| Kentucky Regiment                               | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | ..                   | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 5                    |
| Ohio Regiment                                   | ..                 | 1                  | 15                   | ..                   | ..                 | 6                  | 32                   | ..                   |
| Tennessee Regiment                              | ..                 | 2                  | 27                   | ..                   | ..                 | 4                  | 75                   | ..                   |
| Mississippi Regiment                            | ..                 | ..                 | 9                    | ..                   | ..                 | 5                  | 47                   | ..                   |
| Colonel Wood's Texas<br>Rangers.                | ..                 | ..                 | 2                    | ..                   | ..                 | ..                 | ..                   | 4                    |
| [Killed 56, wounded 224.]                       | ..                 | 3                  | 53                   | ..                   | ..                 | 16                 | 208                  | ..                   |
| Grand total                                     | 13                 | 72                 | 5                    | 68                   | 5                  | 125                | 16                   | 246                  |
| Grand total killed                              |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      | 158                  |
| Wounded                                         |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      | 392                  |
| Killed and wounded                              |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      | 550                  |
| Missing                                         |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      | 11                   |
| Grand total, killed, wounded, and missing       |                    |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                      | 561                  |

## CHAPTER XIV.

Occupation of the City by Worth's Division—Encampment of Butler's and Twiggs' Divisions—Consideration of the Terms of Capitulation—Implied Censure by Congress of the Terms—Defence of the same—Jefferson Davis' Views regarding the Capitulation—Taylor's Letter to the Adjutant General, justifying it—Private Letter on the same Subject, and on his past Operations and future Plans—Concluding Remarks.

As soon as the Mexican army had evacuated Monterey, General Taylor quartered General Worth's Division in it, and continued the two other divisions of his army at the grove of San Domingo, the only woodland in the neighbourhood of the city. The wounded were duly cared for, and all who had shared the labours and dangers of the siege enjoyed a period of comparative repose. Immediate measures, however, were adopted, to restore and improve the defences of the city, and to be prepared for future active operations if the hostilities should be renewed. Before the recital of General Taylor's subsequent movements is commenced, it is proper to recur to the terms of the capitulation. A portion of his own troops was undoubtedly at the moment disappointed, on seeing the Mexican army departing, with all the parade of music, banners, and arms, when it was believed to be wholly at the mercy of the victors. Time and reflection dissipated this feeling, which had never interfered with the respect or confidence with which Taylor had previously inspired his men. But condemnation of his policy was seriously avowed in a quarter, which affected his position before the country. When the news of the convention of Monterey was received at Washington, it found little favour with the government, or with a portion of the administration party in Congress. When a resolution of thanks to General Taylor, and the army under his command, for their gallantry in the capture of Monterey, was under consideration, a proviso was offered and finally adopted, in these words: "That nothing herein contained shall be construed into an approbation of the terms of the capitulation of Monterey." The friends of General Taylor contended that



this proviso was in effect a resolution of censure, and on this ground many of them refused to vote for the original resolution of thanks. It becomes necessary to show how entirely unmerited was this deliberate exception to his conduct. The first proper testimony on this head is that of the commissioners who agreed to the Convention. They are men, whose intelligence, patriotism, and courage are above suspicion, and who would neither have counselled nor sanctioned any terms short of the most honourable and expedient which our army could have enforced. Colonel Davis, one of the commissioners, ably defended the convention in a document already quoted, and the grounds of his defence were fully approved by General Worth. That document takes briefly this view of the question:

“It is demonstrable, from the position and known prowess of the two armies, that we could drive the enemy from the town; but the town was untenable whilst the main fort (called the new citadel) remained in the hands of the enemy. Being without siege artillery or entrenching tools, we could only hope to carry this fort by storm, after a heavy loss from our army; which, isolated in a hostile country, now numbered less than half the forces of the enemy. When all this had been achieved, what more would we have gained than by the capitulation?”

“General Taylor’s force was too small to invest the town. It was, therefore, always in the power of the enemy to retreat, bearing his light arms. Our army, poorly provided, and with very insufficient transportation, could not have overtaken, if they had pursued the flying enemy. Hence the conclusion, that as it was not in our power to capture the main body of the Mexican army, it is unreasonable to suppose their general would have surrendered at discretion. The moral effect of retiring under the capitulation was certainly greater than if the enemy had retired without our consent. By this course we secured the large supply of ammunition he had collected in Monterey—which, had the assault been continued, must have been exploded by our shells, as it was principally stored in the ‘Cathedral,’ which, being supposed to be filled with troops, was the especial aim of our pieces. The destruction which

this explosion would have produced must have involved the advance of both divisions of our troops; and I commend this to the contemplation of those whose arguments have been drawn from facts learned since the commissioners closed their negotiations."

The correspondence of General Taylor further elucidates the respective positions of his own and the enemy's forces at the time of the capitulation. The armistice not having been approved by the President, he was instructed to "give the requisite notice, that the armistice was to cease at once, and that each party was at liberty to resume and prosecute hostilities without restriction." The reply to the letter enclosing this order is subjoined. It is addressed to the Adjutant General.

"Camp near Monterey, November 8, 1846.

"SIR: In reply to so much of the communication of the Secretary of War, as relates to the reasons which induced the convention resulting in the capitulation of Monterey, I have the honour to submit the following remarks.

"The convention presents two distinct points: *First*, the permission granted the Mexican army to retire with their arms, &c. *Secondly*, the temporary cessation of hostilities for the term of eight weeks. I shall remark on these in order.

"The force with which I marched on Monterey was limited by causes beyond my control to about six thousand men. With this force, as every military man must admit, who has seen the ground, it was entirely impossible to invest Monterey so closely as to prevent the escape of the garrison. Although the main communication with the interior was in our possession, yet one route was open to the Mexicans throughout the operations, and could not be closed, as were also other minor tracks and passes through the mountains. Had we, therefore, insisted on more rigorous terms than those granted, the result would have been the escape of the body of the Mexican force, with the destruction of its artillery and magazines, our only advantage being the capture of a few prisoners of war, at the expense of valuable lives and much damage to the city. The consideration of hu-

manity was present to my mind during the conference which led to the convention, and outweighed, in my judgment, the doubtful advantages to be gained by a resumption of the attack upon the town. This conclusion has been fully confirmed by an inspection of the enemy's position and means since the surrender. It was discovered that his principal magazine, containing an immense amount of powder, was in the Cathedral, completely exposed to our shells from two directions. The explosion of this mass of powder, which must have ultimately resulted from a continuance of the bombardment, would have been infinitely disastrous, involving the destruction not only of Mexican troops, but of non-combatants, and even our own people, had we pressed the attack.

"In regard to the temporary cessation of hostilities, the fact that we are not at this moment, within eleven days of the termination of the period fixed by the convention, prepared to move forward in force, is a sufficient explanation of the military reasons which dictated this suspension of arms. It paralyzed the enemy during a period when, from the want of necessary means, we could not possibly move. I desire distinctly to state, and to call the attention of the authorities to the fact, that, with all diligence in breaking mules and setting up wagons, the first wagons in addition to our original train from Corpus Christi, (and but one hundred and twenty-five in number,) reached my head-quarters on the same day with the secretary's communication of October 13th, viz: the 2d inst. At the date of the surrender of Monterey, our force had not more than ten days' rations, and even now, with all our endeavours, we have not more than twenty-five. THE TASK OF FIGHTING AND BEATING THE ENEMY IS AMONG THE LEAST DIFFICULT THAT WE ENCOUNTER—the great question of supplies necessarily controls all the operations in a country like this. At the date of the convention, I could not of course have foreseen that the Department would direct an important detachment from my command without consulting me, or without waiting the result of the main operation under my orders.

"I have touched the prominent military points involved in



the convention of Monterey. There were other considerations which weighed with the commissioners in framing, and with myself in approving the articles of the convention. In the conference with General Ampudia, I was distinctly told by him that he had invited it to spare the further effusion of blood, and because General Santa Anna had declared himself favorable to peace. I knew that our government had made propositions to that of Mexico to negotiate, and I deemed that the change of government in that country since my instructions, fully warranted me in entertaining considerations of policy. My grand motive in moving forward with very limited supplies had been to increase the inducements of the Mexican Government to negotiate for peace. Whatever may be the actual views or disposition of the Mexican rulers or of General Santa Anna, it is not unknown to the Government that I had the very best reason for believing the statement of General Ampudia to be true. It was my opinion at the time of the convention, and it has not been changed, that the liberal treatment of the Mexican army, and the suspension of arms, would exert none but a favorable influence in our behalf.

“The result of the entire operation has been to throw the Mexican army back more than three hundred miles to the city of San Luis Potosi, and to open the country to us as far as we choose to penetrate it up to the same point.

“It has been my purpose in this communication not so much to defend the convention from the censure which I deeply regret to find implied in the secretary’s letter, as to show that it was not adopted without cogent reasons, most of which occur of themselves to the minds of all who are acquainted with the condition of things here. To that end I beg that it may be laid before the General-in-chief and Secretary of War.”

The nature of the assaults made on General Taylor, in consequence of the capitulation so ably and conclusively defended and justified in the foregoing official letter, induced one of his friends, whom he had privately addressed on the same subject, in connection with a general review of his operations, to per-

mit the publication of a letter not intended for the public eye. That letter superadds such testimony in favour of his whole course, that being already before the world, it would be an affectation injurious to his reputation to exclude it from these pages. It is the more interesting, therefore, as an unstudied and frank exposition of his conduct and motives, and of the difficulties which he encountered in the fulfilment of the momentous duties imposed upon him. Portions of the letter were suppressed in the original publication. It is here given as it first appeared.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation or Invasion.  
Monterey, Mexico, Nov. 5, 1846.

My DEAR \* \* \* \* \*

Your very kind and acceptable letter of the 31st of August, \* \* \* \* \* reached me only a short time since for which I beg leave to tender to you my sincere thanks. [A few confidential remarks on certain public transactions are here omitted.]

After considerable apparent delay on the part of the Quartermaster's Department, in getting steamboats into the Rio Grande adapted to its navigation, I succeeded, towards the latter part of August, in throwing forward to Camargo, (a town situated on the San Juan river, three miles from its junction with the Rio Grande, on the west side, nearly five hundred miles from Brazos Island by water, and two hundred by land, and one hundred and forty from this place,) a considerable depot of provisions, ordnance, ammunition, and forage, and then, having brought together an important portion of my command, I determined on moving on this place. Accordingly, after collecting 1700 pack mules, with their attendants and conductors, in the enemy's country, (the principal means of transportation for our provisions, baggage, &c.,) I left, on the 5th of September, to join my advance, which had preceded me a few days to Serhalvo, a small village seventy-five miles on the route, which I did on the 9th, and, after waiting there a few days for some of the corps to get up, moved on and reached here on the 19th, with 6250 men—2700 regulars, the balance volunteers. For

what took place afterwards I must refer you to several reports, particularly to my detailed one of the 9th ult. I do not believe the authorities at Washington are at all satisfied with my conduct in regard to the terms of capitulation entered into with the Mexican commander, which you no doubt have seen, as they have been made public through the official organ, and copied into various other newspapers. I have this moment received an answer (to my despatch announcing the surrender of Monterey, and the circumstances attending the same,) from the Secretary of War, stating that "it was regretted by the President that it was not advisable to insist on the terms I had proposed in my communication to the Mexican commander, in regard to giving up the city,"—adding that "the circumstances which dictated, no doubt justified the change." Although the terms of capitulation may be considered too liberal on our part by the President and his advisers, as well as by many others at a distance, particularly by those who do not understand the position which we occupied, (otherwise they might come to a different conclusion in regard to the matter,) yet, on due reflection, I see nothing to induce me to regret the course I pursued.

The proposition on the part of General Ampudia, which had much to do in determining my course in the matter, was based on the ground that our government had proposed to him to settle existing difficulties by negotiation, (which I knew was the case, without knowing the result,) which was then under consideration by the proper authorities, and which he (General Ampudia,) had no doubt would result favourably, as the whole of his people were in favour of peace. If so, I considered the further effusion of blood not only unnecessary, but improper. Their force was also considerably larger than ours; and, from the size and position of the place, we could not completely invest it; so that the greater portion of their troops, if not the whole, had they been disposed to do so, could, any night, have abandoned the city at once, entered the mountain passes, and effected their retreat, do what we could! Had we been put to the alternative of taking the place by storm, (which there



is no doubt we should have succeeded in doing,) we should, in all probability, have lost fifty or one hundred men in killed, besides the wounded, which I wished to avoid, as there appeared to be a prospect of peace, even if a distant one. I also wished to avoid the destruction of women and children, which must have been very great, had the storming process been resorted to. Besides, they had a very large and strong fortification, a short distance from the city, which, if carried with the bayonet, must have been taken at great sacrifice of life; and, with our limited train of heavy or battering artillery, it would have required twenty or twenty-five days to take it by regular approaches.

That they should have surrendered a place nearly as strong as Quebec, well fortified under the direction of skilful engineers, their works garnished with forty-two pieces of artillery, abundantly supplied with ammunition, garrisoned by 7000 regulars and 2000 irregular troops, in addition to some thousand citizens capable of, and no doubt actually, bearing arms, and aiding in its defence, to an opposing force of half their number, scantily supplied with provisions, and with a light train of artillery, is among the unaccountable occurrences of the times.

I am decidedly opposed to carrying the war beyond Saltillo in this direction, which place has been entirely abandoned by the Mexican forces, all of whom have been concentrated at San Luis Potosi; and I shall lose no time in taking possession of the former as soon as the cessation of hostilities referred to expires, which I have notified the Mexican authorities will be the close on the 13th instant, by direction of the President of the United States.

If we are (in the language of Mr. Polk and General Scott) under the necessity of "conquering a peace," and that by taking the capital of the country, we must go to Vera Cruz, take that place, and then march on the city of Mexico. To do so in any other direction, I consider out of the question. But, admitting that we conquer a peace by doing so, say at the end of the next twelve months, will the amount of blood and treasure, which must be expended in doing so, be compensated

by the same? I think not—especially, if the country we subdue is to be given up; and I imagine there are but few individuals in our country who think of annexing Mexico to the United States.

I do not intend to carry on my operations (as previously stated) beyond Saltillo, deeming it next to impracticable to do so. It then becomes a question as to what is best to be done. It seems to me, the most judicious course to be pursued on our part, would be to take possession at once of the line we would accept by negotiation, extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific, and occupy the same, or keep what we already have possession of; and that, with Tampico, (which I hope to take in the course of next month, or as soon as I can get the means of transportation,) will give us all on this side of the Sierra Madre, and as soon as I occupy Saltillo, will include six or seven states or provinces, thus holding Tampico, Victoria, Monterey, Saltillo, Monclova, Chihuahua, (which, I presume, General Wool has possession of by this time) Santa Fe, and the Californias, and say to Mexico, “drive us from the country!”—throwing on her the responsibility and expense of carrying on offensive war—at the same time closely blockading all her ports on the Pacific and the Gulf. A course of this kind, if persevered in for a short time, would soon bring her to her proper senses, and compel her to sue for peace—provided there is a government in the country sufficiently stable for us to treat with, which I fear will hardly be the case for many years to come. Without large reinforcements of volunteers from the United States, say ten or fifteen thousand, (those previously sent out having already been greatly reduced by sickness and other casualties), I do not believe it would be advisable to march beyond Saltillo, which is more than two hundred miles beyond our depots on the Rio Grande, a very long line on which to keep up supplies (over a land route in a country like this) for a large force, and certain to be attended with an expense which it will be frightful to contemplate, when closely looked into.

From Saltillo to San Luis Potosi, the next place of import-

ance on the road to the city of Mexico, is three hundred miles, one hundred and forty badly watered, where no supplies of any kind could be procured for men or horses. I have informed the war department that 20,000 efficient men would be necessary to insure success if we move on that place, (a city containing a population of 60,000, where the enemy could bring together and sustain, besides the citizens, an army of 50,000) a force which, I apprehend, will hardly be collected by us, with the train necessary to feed it, as well as to transport various other supplies, particularly ordnance and munitions of war.

In regard to the armistice, which would have expired by limitation in a few days, we lost nothing by it, as we could not move even now, had the enemy continued to occupy Saltillo; for, strange to say, the first wagon which has reached me since the declaration of war was on the 2d instant, the same day on which I received from Washington an acknowledgment of my despatch announcing the taking of Monterey; and then I received only one hundred and twenty-five, so that I have been, since May last, completely crippled, and am still so, for want of transportation. After raking and scraping the country for miles around Camargo, collecting every pack mule and other means of transportation, I could bring here only 80,000 rations, (fifteen days' supply,) with a moderate supply of ordnance, ammunition, &c., to do which, all the corps had to leave behind a portion of their camp equipage necessary for their comfort, and, in some instances, among the volunteers, their personal baggage. I moved in such a way, and with such limited means, that, had I not succeeded, I should no doubt have been severely reprimanded, if nothing worse. I did so to sustain the administration,

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

Of the two regiments of mounted men from Tennessee and Kentucky, who left their respective states to join me, in June, the latter has just reached Camargo; the former had not got to Matamoros at the latest dates from there. Admitting that they will be as long in returning as in getting here, (to say no-



thing of the time necessary to recruit their horses) and were to be discharged in time to reach their homes, they could serve in Mexico but a very short time. The foregoing remarks are not made with the view of finding fault with any one, but to point out the difficulties with which I have had to contend.

Monterey, the capital of New Leon, is situated on the San Juan river, where it comes out of the mountains, the city (which contains a population of about twelve thousand) being in part surrounded by them, at the head of a large and beautiful valley. The houses are of stone, in the Moorish style, with flat roofs, which, with their strongly enclosed yards and gardens, in high stone walls all looped for musketry, make them each a fortress within itself. It is the most important place in Northern Mexico, or on the east side of the Sierra Madre, commanding the only pass or road for carriages from this side, between it and the Gulf of Mexico, to the table lands of the Sierra, by or through which the city of Mexico can be reached.

I much fear I shall have exhausted your patience, before you get half through this long and uninteresting letter. If so, you can only commit it to the flames, and think no more about it, as I write in great haste, besides being interrupted every five minutes; so that you must make great allowances for blots, interlineations, and blunders, as well as want of connection in many parts of the same.

Be so good as to present me most kindly to your excellent lady, and accept my sincere wishes for your continued health, prosperity, and fame.

I remain, truly and sincerely, your friend,

Z. TAYLOR.

It is conceived that the foregoing correspondence thoroughly sustains General Taylor in the apparently liberal terms which he allowed Ampudia in the capitulation of Monterey. Public opinion sustained him from the first; and, it is believed, that there are few now so bold as to except to his course. If so, it is the only instance in the many and arduous tasks which he has executed since the commencement of the Mexican war,

which even his enemies could seize upon as worthy of exception. Tried in every emergency, he has been found equal to the trust reposed in him. So has the nation felt, so has it spoken, when, with one indignant voice, it crushed a suggestion that he should be superseded in the field of his many extraordinary trials and triumphs.

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## CHAPTER XV.

Taylor's Force after the Capitulation of Monterey—Reflections on his Course—Advices from Washington—Instructions regarding Supplies—Regarding an Expedition against the Coast—Further Correspondence—Taylor's Replies—Opinions regarding his own future Operations—Regarding the Force requisite to invest Vera Cruz—Assertion of his Rights as Commander—Answer to the Secretary respecting forced Supplies—General Wool's Entry into Monclova.

THE correspondence of General Taylor, given in the preceding pages, for the purpose of elucidating the single subject of the capitulation of Monterey, contains, also, references to other matters which have not yet been presented in a narrative form. To these it is necessary to revert, in order that the position of the army under Taylor's command, and the plans of the War Department, affecting its strength and movements, may be fully understood.

The capture of Monterey found the army reduced at that place to an effective force of about five thousand five hundred men. This small number was soon further diminished by sickness, occasioned by the climate, the season, and hardship, to which more than two-thirds of the men were wholly unused. General Taylor's letters have shown that, had no armistice been agreed upon, he would still have been unable to make any important hostile demonstration far beyond Monterey. It is true that a large body of volunteers was at different points on the Rio Grande ; but the difficulty of subsistence, on a line already extended one hundred and fifty miles, forbade the immediate

advance of the army. This was a difficulty apprehended by Taylor from the first, and for which he was in no sense responsible. At the moment that the operations against Monterey were in progress, a change of policy, as regards the mode of procuring supplies, was recommended by the government.

Advices having been received at Washington that a new effort to secure peace by negotiation had failed—the reliance on Santa Anna's pacific disposition having been misplaced—the Secretary of War wrote to General Taylor that this determination on the part of the enemy suggested a change of policy in regard to our dealings with the people of the country occupied by our troops. On this particular subject the Secretary continued his instructions, under date of the 22d of September, in these terms:

“Public opinion, it is to be presumed, will have some influence upon the decision of that congress. The progress of our arms, and the positions we may occupy when that body shall come together, cannot fail to have effect upon its action in regard to our proposal to negotiate. Should the campaign be successful, and our troops be in possession of important departments of the enemy's country, the inducement for a speedy peace will be greatly strengthened.

“It is far from being certain that our military occupation of the enemy's country is not a blessing to the inhabitants in the vicinity. They are shielded from the burdens and exactions of their own authorities, protected in their persons, and furnished with a most profitable market for most kinds of their property. A state of things so favourable to their interests may induce them to wish the continuance of hostilities.

“The instructions heretofore given have required you to treat with great kindness the people, to respect private property, and to abstain from appropriating it to the public use without purchase at a fair price. In some respects, this is going far beyond the common requirements of civilized warfare. An invading army has the unquestionable right to draw its supplies from the enemy without paying for them, and to require contributions for its support. It may be proper, and



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good policy requires that discriminations should be made in imposing these burdens. Those who are friendly disposed or contribute aid should be treated with liberality ; yet the enemy may be made to feel the weight of the war, and thereby become interested to use their best efforts to bring about a state of peace.

“ It is also but just that a nation which is involved in a war, to obtain justice or to maintain its just rights, should shift the burden of it, as far as practicable, from itself, by throwing it upon the enemy.

“ Upon the liberal principles of civilized warfare, either of three modes may be pursued in relation to obtaining supplies from the enemy ; first to purchase them on such terms as the inhabitants of the country may choose to exact ; second, to pay a fair price without regard to the enhanced value resulting from the presence of a foreign army ; and third, to require them as contributions, without paying or engaging to pay therefor.

“ The last mode is the ordinary one, and you are instructed to adopt it, if in that way you are satisfied you can get abundant supplies for your forces ; but should you apprehend a difficulty in this respect, then you will adopt the policy of paying the ordinary price, without allowing to the owners the advantages of the enhancement of the price resulting from the increased demand. Should you apprehend a deficiency under this last mode of dealing with the inhabitants, you will be obliged to submit to their exactions, provided by this mode you can supply your wants on better terms than by drawing what you may need from the United States. Should you attempt to supply your troops by contributions, or the appropriation of private property, you will be careful to exempt the property of all foreigners from any and all exactions whatsoever. The President hopes you will be able to derive from the enemy's country, without expense to the United States, the supplies you may need, or a considerable part of them ; but should you fail in this, you will procure them in the most economical manner.”

The same communication of the Secretary, from which the foregoing extracts are made, sets forth the plan of the government in the prosecution of the war. This plan was subsequently modified, but as the instructions concerning it were partially fulfilled, they are here inserted as a necessary explanation of General Taylor's movements. The Secretary says:

"It is proposed to take possession of the department of Tamaulipas, or some of the principal places in it, at the earliest practicable period. In this enterprize, it is believed that a co-operation of our squadron in the gulf will be important, if not necessary. It is presumed that a force of about three or four thousand men will be sufficient for this purpose—one third of which should be of the regular army.

"We have not now sufficiently accurate knowledge of the country to determine definitely as to the manner of conducting this enterprize. The dangerous navigation of the gulf at this season of the year, induces the hope that a column may be advanced by land from the present base of operations—the Rio Grande; and that it may have an occasional communication with our ships in the gulf. Should this land route be adjudged impracticable, or a debarkation be preferred, *two points of landing* have been suggested, one at the Bay of Santander, and the other at Tampico. If a force be landed at the Bay of Santander, or in the vicinity of Soto la Marina, it could probably reach, without much difficulty, some of the principal places in the department of Tamaulipas, and march to, and take possession of Tampico; while the route is yet open to be settled, as a better knowledge of the country may indicate, it is proper to speak more in detail of the force to be employed on this service.

"It is not proposed to withdraw any of that now with you in your advance into the interior, nor to divert any of the reinforcements that you may need to carry on your operations in that quarter. It is believed that a sufficient force of the regular army for this expedition—about one regiment—may be drawn from the sea-board, including such companies as may have been left on the lower Rio Grande, and can be spared for that

purpose. If a column should advance beyond that river into the interior of Tamaulipas, a part of the troops now on that line, might, it is presumed, be safely withdrawn to augment the invading column. It is not, however, intended to weaken the force on that line any further than it can, in your opinion, be safely done.

“It is also proposed to put the force for the invasion of Tamaulipas under the immediate command of Major General Patterson, to be accompanied by Brigadier Generals Pillow and Shields, unless it should interfere with your previous arrangement with regard to these officers. To prevent delay, General Patterson will be directed to make preparations for this movement, so far as it can be done without disturbing your present arrangements on the Rio Grande, and proceed immediately, and without further orders from the Department, unless you should be of opinion that the withdrawal of the force proposed for this expedition, would interfere with your operations. This direction is given to General Patterson, because the time necessary to receive information from you and return an answer from the department, may be the propitious moment for operating with effect. The movement ought to be made with the least possible delay consistently with the health of the troops. It will be left to General Patterson, under your instructions, to decide whether the movement shall be by land or sea, or partly by each. It is desired that you should give him your views in regard to the last mode of prosecuting this expedition, particularly as to the amount and description of force, and the quantity and kind of ordnance, &c., &c., which may be required. Preparatory arrangements will be immediately ordered here for fitting out the expedition therein proposed, by which transports, provisions, &c., will be in readiness at the Brazos Santiago. By the time this communication will be received by you, it is expected that you will have reached Monterey, and perhaps Saltillo, and be able to present to the Department a satisfactory opinion of your ability to progress beyond that point. We shall anxiously look for information from you. Your advance to San Luis Potosi, if practicable, is rendered



greatly more important by the movement contemplated to Tampico, by which you will, it is believed, be enabled to effect a co-operation with the squadron, and with the column under Major General Patterson, on a line in advance of the Rio Grande. The squadron is now under orders to attack Tampico, with every prospect of success, and the probability is that the place will be captured in advance of General Patterson's movement."

On the same day that General Taylor was thus addressed, the Secretary wrote to General Patterson that, unless General Taylor had made arrangements to employ him otherwise, it was designed that the expedition against the State of Tamaulipas should be under his immediate command. The Secretary added, "As soon as you shall learn from General Taylor that a sufficient force for the enterprize can be spared, and receive his directions in regard to it, you will lose no time in putting them in execution. If General Taylor should not give directions as to moving by land or water, the choice will then be left for your determination."

On the 13th of October, the Secretary addressed General Taylor in reference to the capitulation of Monterey, in which he expressed the "President's regret that it was not deemed advisable to insist on the terms first proposed." And after further remarks he proceeds to say:

"As the offer recently made by the United States to open negotiations for a peace was not acceded to by the present rulers of Mexico, but reserved to be submitted to and acted on by a congress to be assembled on the 6th of December next, it was deemed by the government here highly important, that the war in the mean time should be prosecuted with the utmost vigour, to the end that they might be made sensible of the evils of its continuance, and thereby become more inclined to bring it to a speedy close. In pursuance of this policy an expedition was proposed, in my despatch of the 22d ult., for the purpose of taking possession of the entire Department of Tamaulipas, and, under the belief that it would not interfere with your plans and operations, no doubt was entertained that

it would receive your concurrence and support. In anticipation thereof, measures have been already taken to carry it out at the earliest practicable period.

“By the arrangement you have made for a temporary suspension of hostilities, within certain limits of the enemy’s country, if continued to the end of the time stipulated, a considerable part of Tamaulipas will be exempted from military operations, until within a few days of the time fixed for the meeting of the Mexican Congress, and the expedition thereby delayed, or if prosecuted by the land or naval forces, might bring into question the good faith of the United States.

“In the despatch before referred to, you will perceive that an attack by our naval force upon some places on the coast of Tamaulipas is also contemplated. Whatever may be the advantage or the necessity of the co-operation of a land force, it must be withheld until near the close of November, if the armistice is continued to the end of the stipulated period.

“The government is fully persuaded that, if you had been aware of the special reasons disclosed in the despatch of the 22d ultimo, and the intentions of the government, still entertained, you would not have acceded to the suspension of hostilities for even the limited period specified in the articles of capitulation; but as its continuance depends on the orders of your government, you are instructed to give the requisite notice that the armistice is to cease at once, and that each party is at liberty to resume and prosecute hostilities without restriction.

“The city of Monterey is regarded as an important acquisition. While held by a competent force, the authorities of Mexico may be considered as dispossessed of the Department of New Leon. It is therefore proposed that you should make the necessary arrangements for retaining possession of it during the war.

“Not only Monterey, but the State of New Leon may, it is presumed, be regarded as a conquered country, and, as a consequence, the civil authorities of Mexico are in a measure superseded, or, at least, subject to your control. You will

give this subject your consideration, and permit only such civil functionaries to retain and exercise power as are well disposed towards the United States.

“It is an object of much interest to the government to be put in possession of your views as to your future operations.

“The season for carrying on military operations in the enemy's country lying on the gulf has now arrived. It is deemed important that we should have possession of the whole of Tamaulipas before the meeting of the Mexican Congress in December. It is hoped that the expedition for that purpose, suggested in my communication of the 22d of September, can be organized and sent forward without at all interfering with the contemplated operation of the forces under your immediate command.

“Among the officers presented to your consideration to be employed in this expedition was Brigadier General Shields. Attention was directed to him, by the knowledge that he had become acquainted with some of the principal inhabitants of Tamaulipas, and by that means had acquired information which would have been useful in conducting the enterprize. He has, however, since received orders to join General Wool, and probably cannot be conveniently recalled. If this can be done, and another brigadier sent to General Wool, it might be advantageous to the public service to make the exchange. This is, however, left entirely to yourself. As to the employment of Major General Patterson, and Brigadier General Pillow, the wishes of the President and Department are unchanged.

“It is under consideration by the government, though not yet fully determined, to land a considerable force in the vicinity of Vera Cruz, and invest that city. Should this be undertaken, a larger force of regular troops will be required than that assigned to the Tamaulipas expedition. It is desired to know if, in your opinion, a detachment of two thousand of this description of force can be spared for that purpose from those under your command, without essentially interfering with your plans and operations. It is not desired or intended to weaken the force with you at Monterey, or to embarrass you by divert-



ing troops from the Rio Grande, which you may deem necessary as reinforcements to the execution of your own contemplated operations."

In answer to the instructions of the Secretary, under date of the 22d of September, General Taylor wrote on the 13th of October that, under the terms of the capitulation, he could not detach a force south of a line from Linares to San Fernando. He therefore requested modified instructions. On the 15th of October, General Taylor wrote the following full, very able, and spirited letter to the War Department. It merits attention on three grounds: 1st, the views of the author concerning his own movements; 2d, concerning an attack on Vera Cruz; and, 3d, concerning his rights as commander. On the second head, experience has now justified his decided opinions. Had the operations against Mexico, through Vera Cruz, been effected by an army of twenty-five thousand men, it is unnecessary to say that, although the ultimate result might not have been different, the immediate effect of the presence of such a force would probably have saved time and treasure, and certainly the sacrifice of thousands of lives.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camp near Monterey, Oct. 15, 1846.

"SIR:—In my acknowledgment, dated the 12th instant, of the instructions of the Secretary of War, of September 22d, I briefly stated that the detachment to Tampico could not be made without contravening the convention of Monterey. Other reasons and more detailed views on this point and the general question of the campaign, I left to a subsequent communication, which I have now the honour to submit for the information of the General-in-Chief and the Secretary of War. Such a point has been reached in the conduct of the war and the progress of our arms, as to make it proper to place my impressions and convictions very fully before the government.

"I wish to remark, first of all, that I have considered Brigadier General Wool, though formally under my orders, yet as charged by the government with a distinct operation, with

which I was not at liberty to interfere. Though greatly in doubt as to the practicability of his reaching Chihuahua with artillery, and deeming the importance of the operation at any rate to be not at all commensurate with its difficulty and expense, I have accordingly refrained from controlling his movements in any way. His force, therefore, forms no element in my calculations, particularly as it now is, or soon will be, entirely beyond my reach.

“The Mexican army under General Ampudia has left Saltillo, and fallen back on San Luis Potosi—the last detachment, as I understand, being under orders to march to-day. General Santa Anna reached San Luis on the 8th instant, and is engaged in concentrating and organizing the army at that point. Whether the withdrawal of the forces to San Luis be intended to draw us into the country, far from supplies and support, or whether it be a political movement, connected with Santa Anna’s return to power, it is impossible to say; it is sufficient for my present argument to know that a heavy force is assembling in our front. Saltillo, the capital of Coahuila, is virtually in our possession, and can be occupied, if necessary, the moment the convention is at an end. The occupation of Saltillo will lengthen our line seventy-five miles, but, on the other hand, may enable us to draw at least a portion of our breadstuffs from the country. San Luis is about three hundred miles from Saltillo, perhaps more.

“San Luis is a city of some 60,000 inhabitants, in a country abundant in resources, and at no great distance from the heart of the Republic, whence munitions of war and reinforcements can readily be drawn. It is at the same time nearly six hundred miles from the Rio Grande, which must continue to be the base of our operation, at least until we reach San Luis.

“In view of the above facts, I hazard nothing in saying, that a column to move on San Luis from Saltillo, should, to ensure success, be at least 20,000 strong, of which 10,000 should be regular troops. After much reflection, I consider the above as the smallest number of *effective* troops that could be employed on this service without incurring the hazard of

disaster and perhaps defeat. There would be required, besides, to keep open our long line, protect the depots, and secure the country already gained, a force of 5000 men — this, without including the force necessary to send to Tampico to take or hold that place.

“The above estimate may seem large, when it is remembered that important results have been gained with a much smaller force. But we have hitherto operated near our own base, and the Mexicans at a great distance from theirs. Saltillo may be considered about equidistant from the Rio Grande and San Luis. Every day's march beyond it lengthens our already long line and curtails theirs — weakens us, and gives them strength. Hence the movement should not be undertaken except with a force so large as to render success certain.

“In the above calculation I have supposed the Mexicans able to concentrate at San Luis a force of 40,000 to 50,000 men. With tolerable stability in the government, I doubt not their ability to do this, and it is not safe to assume any less number as a basis.

“The force of twelve months' volunteers has suffered greatly from disease. Many have died, and a great number have been discharged for disability. So much has their effective strength been reduced by this cause and present sickness that, in the absence of official returns, I am satisfied that five hundred men per regiment would be a large average of *effectives* among the volunteers. This would give, including the cavalry, a force a little short of 9000 men, or, adding 4000 regulars, (our present strength is not 3000,) a total force of 13,000. Leaving the very moderate number of 3000 to secure our rear, I should not be able to march from Saltillo, with present and expected means, at the head of more than 10,000 men — a number, which, from considerations above stated, I deem to be entirely inadequate.

“And now I come to the point presented in the Secretary's letters. A simultaneous movement on San Luis and Tampico is there suggested; but it will readily be seen that, with only half the force which I consider necessary to march on one



point, it is quite impossible to march on both, and that nothing short of an effective force of 25,000 to 30,000 men would, on military principles, justify the double movement. And it is to be remarked, that the possession of Tampico is indispensable in case we advance to San Luis, for the line hence to the latter place is entirely too long to be maintained permanently, and must be abandoned for the shorter one from Tampico, the moment San Luis is taken.

“I have spoken only of the number of troops deemed necessary for the prosecution of the campaign beyond Saltillo. It will be understood that largely increased means and material of every kind will be equally necessary to render the army efficient, such as cavalry and artillery horses, means of transportation, ordnance stores, &c.

“The Department may be assured that the above views have not been given without mature reflection, and have been the result of experience and careful inquiry. It will be for the government to determine whether the war shall be prosecuted by directing an active campaign against San Luis and the capital, or whether the country already gained shall be held, and a defensive attitude assumed. In the latter case, the general line of the Sierra Madre might very well be taken; but even then, with the enemy in force in my front, it might be imprudent to detach to Tampico so large a force as 3000 or 4000 men, particularly of the description required for that operation. If the co-operation of the army, therefore, be deemed essential to the success of the expedition against Tampico, I trust that it will be postponed for the present.

“I have not been unmindful of the importance of taking Tampico, and have at least once addressed the Department on the subject. Nothing but the known exposure of the place to the ravages of the yellow fever prevented me from organizing an expedition against it last summer. I knew that, if taken, it could not with any certainty be held, and that the cause would not be removed before the last of November or the first of December.

“It may be expected that I should give my views as to the

policy of occupying a defensive line, to which I have above alluded. I am free to confess that, in view of the difficulties and expense attending a movement into the heart of the country, and particularly in view of the unsettled and revolutionary character of the Mexican Government, the occupation of such a line seems to me the best course that can be adopted. The line taken might either be that on which we propose to insist as the boundary between the Republics—say the Rio Grande—or the line to which we have advanced, viz., the Sierra Madre, including Chihuahua and Santa Fe. The former line could be held with a much smaller force than the latter; but even the line of the Sierra Madre could be held with a force greatly less than would be required for an active campaign. Monterey controls the great outlet from the interior; a strong garrison at this point, with an advance at Saltillo, and small corps at Monclova, Linares, Victoria, and Tampico, would effectually cover the line.

“I have limited my remarks to the position of the army on this frontier, and the requirements of a campaign against San Luis Potosi; the suggestions in the Secretary’s letter being confined to this general theatre of operations. Should the Government determine to strike a decisive blow at Mexico, it is my opinion that the force should land near Vera Cruz or Alvarado, and, after establishing a secure depot, march thence on the capital. The amount of troops required for this service would not fall short, in my judgment, of 25,000 men, of which at least 10,000 should be regular troops.

“In conclusion, I feel it my duty to make some remarks, which I would gladly have been spared the necessity of submitting. I feel it due to my position, and to the service, to record my protest against the manner in which the Department has sought to make an important detachment from my command, specifically indicating not only the general officers, but, to a considerable extent, the troops that were to compose it. While I remain in command of the army against Mexico, and am therefore justly held responsible by the Government and the country for the conduct of its operations, I must claim the

right of organizing all detachments from it, and regulating the time and manner of their service. Above all do I consider it important that the Department of War should refrain from corresponding directly with my subordinates, and communicating orders and instructions on points which, by all military precept and practice, pertain exclusively to the general-in-chief command. Confusion and disaster alone can result from such a course. The reason alleged, viz., the loss of time in communicating with General Patterson, has no application; for the Secretary's despatch came from that officer to my head-quarters in sixty hours, and he could not move, at any rate, without drawing largely upon this column for artillery and regular troops.

"I beg it may be understood that my remarks have no personal application. It is quite probable that, in the event of making such a detachment, I would have placed it under Major General Patterson; but I conceive that this mode of regulating details, and ordering detachments direct from the Department of War, is a violation of the integrity of the chief command in the field, pregnant with the worst evils, and against which I deem it my duty respectfully but earnestly to protest.

"I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major Gen. U. S. A., commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C."

On the subject of forced supplies from the enemy's country, General Taylor, on the 26th of October, replied to the Secretary's suggestions in his letter of the 22d of September, that it would have been impossible before, and was then, to sustain the army to any extent by forced contributions of money or supplies. The country between the Rio Grande and Sierra Madre being poor, furnishing only corn and beef, these articles were obtained at moderate rates; but if a different system had been adopted, it was certain, in General Taylor's opinion, that they would not have been procured at all in sufficient quan-



ties. The prompt payment in cash for the few articles of supply drawn from the country neutralized much of the unfriendly feeling with which the army was regarded, and contributed greatly to facilitate operations. The people had it in their power, at any time, to destroy their crops, and would undoubtedly have done so, rather than see them taken forcibly. Added to which they would have had no inducements to plant again. The prices paid were reasonable, being, in almost all cases, the prices of the country.

General Taylor added, to these views, "should the army, in its future operations, reach a portion of the country which may be made to supply the troops with advantage, I shall not fail to conform to the wishes and instructions of the department in this particular."

In compliance with instructions of the government, General Taylor formally notified the Mexican general-in-chief that the armistice would cease on the 13th of November.

The movements of General Wool's Division, in Northern Mexico, have not yet been noticed in the recital of General Taylor's operations, as they had, until the winter of 1846, no immediate connection with them. In November, however, General Wool had approached near enough to General Taylor's position to make his further advance important to the latter. The force under General Wool consisted of Kentucky, Illinois, and Arkansas volunteers, chiefly cavalry, and a battalion of regular artillery, with six field-pieces, the whole number of men being about twenty-four hundred. This column had pursued a very long and fatiguing march, sustaining with great fortitude its share in the invasion of Mexico. It reached Monclova, distant in a direct line about one hundred miles north of Saltillo, and about seventy miles north-west of Monterey, on the 31st of October.

## CHAPTER XVI.

March of Worth's Division for Saltillo—Taylor's Instructions—His reasons for holding Saltillo—Opinion regarding the Expedition against Vera Cruz—The Forces necessary—Taylor visits Saltillo—Protest of the Governor—Relative position of the Divisions—Tampico occupied—Taylor sets out for Victoria with Twiggs' and Quitman's Brigades—Returns with the former—Concentration at Saltillo—Arrival of Wool's Division expected—Taylor marches again for Victoria with Twiggs' Division—Occupation of Victoria—Forces there—Government Plans against Vera Cruz—Letter from General Scott to General Taylor—Forces withdrawn from General Taylor—Address to his Troops—Loss of May's Rear-guard—Capture of Majors Borland, Gaines, and C. M. Clay—Affairs of Mexico—Activity of Santa Anna—His advance to San Luis—General Wool's Camp—Taylor's advance to Saltillo—Camp at Agua Nueva—At Buena Vista—Enumeration of Santa Anna's Forces—of Taylor's Forces.

ON the 12th of November, a division, commanded by General Worth, composed of two regiments of infantry, one company of volunteers, a field-battery of eight pieces, and eight companies of artillery, marched from Monterey for Saltillo. General Taylor had instructed General Wool to remain at Monclova, to await his own arrival at Saltillo, there to determine what disposition he would make of the column at the former place. It was the purpose of General Taylor, at the same time, to accompany an expedition against Tampico, for which he had taken preliminary steps. The information he had received of the difficulty of obtaining water on the road from Saltillo to San Luis, left him in doubt of the expediency of attempting any further advance into Mexico in that direction. On the day of General Worth's march from Monterey, (the 12th) General Taylor, intending to follow him on the next, to determine his further plans, addressed the War Department, showing the propriety of occupying Saltillo, even though no movement should be made beyond it. He said :

“ Without active operations towards San Luis Potosi from this quarter, I still deem the occupation of Saltillo important for three reasons: first, as a necessary outpost of the main force at Monterey, covering, as it does, the important defile which leads from the low country to the table land, and also

the route to Monclova ; secondly, as controlling a region from which we may expect considerable supplies of breadstuffs and cattle, viz., the fertile country around Parras ; and, thirdly, as the capital of Coahuila, which renders it very important in a political point of view.

“I have already represented to the Department the difficulties to be encountered in a forward movement upon San Luis, and the amount of force which would be necessary to ensure success. Those reasons only apply to the country beyond Saltillo. I consider the occupation of that point as a necessary complement to our operations, and to the policy of holding a defensive line, as the Sierra Madre, and trust the Department will concur with me in this view.”

In the same communication he stated, with regard to the then proposed expedition against Vera Cruz, as he had before, that twenty-five thousand troops, ten thousand being regular, would be properly required to take possession of Vera Cruz, and march thence against the city of Mexico. But for the mere occupation of the former, he expressed to the Secretary the opinion that ten thousand troops would suffice. Regarding the means by which such a force could be raised, he stated the whole ten thousand could not be spared from the occupation of the line of the Sierra Madre ; four thousand might be diverted from that object ; and that if to these six thousand fresh troops from the United States were added at the proper time, the expedition might be undertaken with a promise of success. He proposed, therefore, to proceed with the preparation for a movement on Tampico, and, after accomplishing every thing to be done in that quarter, to hold, if the Department approved, four thousand men, of which there might be three thousand regulars, ready to embark at some point on the coast, and effect a junction with the additional force from the States. The movement towards Tampico, he considered, would not produce any delay if his views were adopted ; and he considered it quite important to occupy Victoria, and the lower portion of Tamaulipas, after securing properly the line to be held in that quarter.



On the 13th of November, General Taylor followed General Worth's Division to Saltillo, escorted by two squadrons of dragoons. This town is the capital of the State of Coahuila, and is distant sixty-five miles south-west from Monterey. As soon as he had crossed the line of the State, General Taylor was met by a messenger from the Governor, with the following protest against his advance :

Saltillo, Nov. 16, 1846.

God and Liberty !

The movement you are making with the forces under your command, leaves no doubt that your object is to invade this city, as have been the greater part of the towns of Coahuila by the troops which have advanced to Monclova. The want of arms in this State leaves me no means to oppose force to force, and will enable you to occupy this capital without opposition, and compel me to retire from it; but in doing so, I ought, and I desire to place upon record, in the most authentic manner, this protest, which I solemnly make, in the name of the State of Coahuila, against the government of the United States of the North, for the usurpation of the territory occupied by their arms—for the outrages and damages which may accrue to the persons and property of the inhabitants of these defenceless towns—for the injuries the public interests may suffer—and for all the evils consequent upon the most unjustifiable invasion ever known to the world.

JOSE MARIE DE AGUIRRE.

Major General TAYLOR, General-in-chief of  
the Army of the United States.

General Taylor, whatever he may have thought of this really pathetic document, proceeded to Saltillo, which General Worth had reached on the 16th, and occupied without opposition.

A reconnoissance was made of the country about twenty-five miles in front, and, at the same time, one projected of the Parras route as far as Patos—a rich hacienda about thirty-five miles from Saltillo.

The division at Saltillo covered the direct route from San

Luis Potosi. The other route would be covered by a force at Parras, which would, at the same time, control abundant supplies to be drawn from the neighbouring country—the richest of the north of Mexico. Brig. Gen. Wool being in position at Monclova, and it being fully ascertained that he could not march thence on Chihuahua, even were it desired, General Taylor ordered him to move on Parras. It was his intention thus completely to occupy and cover the State of Coahuila, and in case of active operations towards the interior, to be in position to march on San Luis, Zacatecas, or Durango. Having made these dispositions, and left with General Worth a squadron of dragoons, General Taylor returned about the 20th to Monterey.

On the 25th he learned officially of the occupation of Tampico, on the 14th of the same month, by the naval forces under Commodore Perry. He had before learned that the garrison had been withdrawn on the 27th of October. On the requisition of Commodore Perry, General Patterson promptly gave orders for Lieut. Col. Belton's battalion (six companies) to proceed to and garrison Tampico; and also took measures to ship thither a sufficient supply of heavy ordnance and provisions. These orders were fully approved by General Taylor, and he directed a regiment of volunteers to be added to the garrison.

General Taylor still made his dispositions to throw forward a force as far as Victoria, with the view of examining the country, and particularly the passes which lead from Linares, and other points, towards the interior. All his plans for the occupation of Victoria, and the retention of the line already acquired, were matured with profound consideration of both means and ends. As set forth in his despatches they exhibit foresight, prudence, and comprehensive judgment of details bearing on one great purpose. Circumstances occurred, however, to change the character, and reduce the number of his troops, and thus to affect his main scheme. The despatches, therefore, touching his preparations and objects in the occupation of Victoria, would, in this place, only postpone other mat-

ter, which has paramount interest. It is sufficient to say that they are among the ablest papers addressed by him to the government.

Monterey was made the head-quarters of General Butler, and on the 15th of December General Taylor set out for Victoria, having previously put in motion the troops destined for that point. At Montemorelos, a junction was effected on the 17th with the 2d infantry, and 2d regiment of Tennessee foot from Camargo, and it was his intention, with the whole force, about three thousand men, to march on the 19th for Victoria. But the evening of his arrival at Montemorelos a despatch arrived from General Worth, commanding at Saltillo, with the intelligence that Santa Anna designed to take advantage of the diversion of force towards Victoria, and by a rapid movement to strike a heavy blow at Saltillo, and if successful, then at General Wool's force at Parras. Under these circumstances, and with no means of judging how far this information might be well-founded, General Taylor deemed it proper to return to Monterey, with the regular force, and thus be in a position to reinforce Saltillo, if necessary. The volunteers under Brig. Gen. Quitman, reinforced by a field-battery, were ordered to continue their march, and effect a junction with Gen. Patterson at Victoria, while General Taylor returned to Monterey with General Twiggs' Division, then increased by the 2d infantry.

In the mean time, General Butler and Brig. Gen. Wool, having been advised by General Worth of a probable attack upon his position, moved rapidly to join him, with all available force, at Parras and Monterey, while orders were despatched by General Butler to hasten up troops from the rear. The latter general proceeded in person to Saltillo, and assumed the command, agreeably to General Taylor's instructions, given before his departure, to meet such a contingency.

General Taylor had proceeded beyond Monterey, on his way to Saltillo, when he was met, on the 20th, by a despatch from Saltillo, announcing the early arrival of General Wool's column, and also that the expected concentration and movement of the Mexican troops upon that position had not taken



place. Deeming the force present and expected at Saltillo sufficient to repel any demonstration from San Luis Potosi, General Taylor thought it unnecessary to throw forward Gen. Twiggs' Division to that place, and, on the 16th of December, again marched with it towards Victoria.

On the 29th, General Quitman occupied Victoria without resistance. The enemy had a body of some fifteen hundred cavalry in the town, but which fell back as General Quitman approached. General Taylor arrived there, with the division of General Twiggs, on the 4th of January, and was joined on the same day by the force which General Patterson conducted from Matamoros. The force collected there was upward of five thousand strong.

While General Taylor was thus maturing his operations, according to his plans already referred to, the government had determined to concentrate the largest possible number of regulars and experienced volunteers in the attack upon Vera Cruz. General Scott was charged with the command of the expedition, and immediately took measures to secure its success. How those measures necessarily affected General Taylor's force is partly shown in the following extracts from a letter addressed to him by General Scott from New York, on the 25th of November. It is proper to remark, that the letter was marked "private and confidential," but was afterwards published with other correspondence of the War Department. General Scott said :

"By the 12th of December I may be in New Orleans, at Point Isabel the 17th, and Camargo say the 23d, in order to be within easy corresponding distance from you. It is not probable that I may be able to visit Monterey, and circumstances may prevent your coming to me. I shall much regret not having an early opportunity of felicitating you in person upon your many brilliant achievements; but we may meet somewhere in the interior of Mexico.

"I am not coming, my dear general, to supersede you in the immediate command on the line of operations rendered illustrious by you and your gallant army. My proposed theatre is

different. You may imagine it, and I wish very much that it were prudent, at this distance, to tell you all that I expect to attempt or hope to execute. I have been admonished that despatches have been lost, and I have no special messenger at hand. Your imagination will be aided by the letters of the Secretary of War, conveyed by Mr. Armistead, Major Graham, and Mr. McLane.

“But, my dear general, I shall be obliged to take from you most of the gallant officers and men (regulars and volunteers) whom you have so long and so nobly commanded. I am afraid that I shall, by imperious necessity—the approach of yellow fever on the Gulf coast—reduce you, for a time, to stand on the defensive. This will be infinitely painful to you, and for that reason distressing to me. But I rely upon your patriotism to submit to the temporary sacrifice with cheerfulness. No man can better afford to do so. Recent victories place you on that high eminence, and I even flatter myself that any benefit that may result to me, personally, from the unequal division of troops alluded to, will lessen the pain of your consequent inactivity.

“You will be aware of the recent call for nine regiments of new volunteers—including one of Texas horse. The President may soon ask for many more, and we are not without hope that Congress may add ten or twelve to the regular establishment. These, by the spring, say April, may, by the aid of large bounties, be in the field—should Mexico not earlier propose terms of accommodation; and long before the spring (March) it is probable you will be again in force to resume offensive operations.

“Your detailed report of the operations at Monterey, and reply to the Secretary’s despatch, by Lieutenant Armistead, were both received two days after I was instructed to proceed south.”

In consequence of the plan thus declared, the regular troops, with the exception of a very small body of the troops which composed his army in the month of November, the division of General Worth at Saltillo, of General Patterson at Victoria,

the brigades of Generals Quitman and Twiggs at the same place, and all other corps which could possibly be drawn from the field of operations, of which the Rio Grande was the base, were ordered to Vera Cruz. To maintain his position at Saltillo, General Taylor had about five thousand men, only five hundred being regulars. On parting with the troops who had so faithfully served with him, he issued an order which in these terms expressed his feelings :

“It is with deep sensibility that the commanding general finds himself separated from the troops he so long commanded. To those corps, regular and volunteer, who have shared with him the active services of the field, he feels the attachment due to such associations, while to those who are making their first campaign, he must express his regret that he cannot participate with them in its eventful scenes. To all, both officers and men, he extends his heartfelt wishes for their continued success and happiness, confident that their achievements on another theatre will redound to the credit of their country and its arms.”

Captain May, on the route from Monterey to Victoria, having been ordered to examine the country on the south, and ascertain whether there was a pass in the mountains in that direction, lost eleven men of his rear-guard, who were cut off by a party of the enemy. The command of Captain May consisted of only two companies of dragoons ; and the misfortune occurred on a mountain road, in a defile so narrow that only one horse could pass it at a time. The enemy was at no time seen by the main body, which was in advance. This affair occurred near Victoria, in the latter part of December. Another trifling success was enjoyed by the enemy on a subsequent day. Major Borland, with a detachment of fifty Arkansas cavalry, and Major Gaines and Cassius M. Clay, with thirty men, were surprised by an overwhelming body of Mexican cavalry at the hacienda of Encarnacion, about forty-five miles south of Saltillo, and taken prisoners. Early in January General Taylor left Victoria with a small escort, and returned to Monterey, where he established his head-quarters.



While the United States were making preparations to attack Vera Cruz, and maintain the positions gained by the northern divisions of the army, under Taylor, Wool, and Kearney, Mexico was also preparing for a decisive blow. In December, the Mexican Congress, convened under the restored Constitution of 1824, assembled in the capital. After considerable discussion, Santa Anna was elected Provisional President, and Gomez Farias, Vice President of the Republic. The command of the army was undertaken by Santa Anna personally. From the moment of his arrival in Mexico, on his return from Havana, his labours had been incessant to restore domestic order, to unite parties, to devise measures of finance, and to raise and equip troops. An attempt to obtain pecuniary aid from the church was bitterly opposed by the Primate of Mexico, and, of course, by the subordinate clergy, who, failing at first in simple remonstrances, succeeded finally by the exercise of their spiritual power. Notwithstanding this and every other embarrassment, Santa Anna had concentrated at San Luis Potosi, before the end of January, 1847, an army of more than twenty-one thousand men, prepared to march thence against the divisions of General Taylor's force between Saltillo and the Rio Grande. On the first of February, Santa Anna with his army was moving rapidly upon that town, upwards of three hundred miles distant from San Luis. The march was arduous, not only on account of this distance, but from the want of water and provisions, and the severity of the winter weather. Unworthy of respect as the Mexican commander has in many instances proved, it is proper to accord him in this the honour of extraordinary energy and ability. On the 20th of February he reached Encarnacion, and the next day his advance on Saltillo was resumed.

General Wool had continued in command of the division of the American army at Saltillo. Near the end of January he advised General Taylor of the rumoured advance of Santa Anna, then organizing his forces at San Luis, as has been mentioned. In consequence of this information, although at that time indefinite, General Taylor determined at once to meet the

enemy, if opportunity should be offered; and, leaving a garrison of fifteen hundred men at Monterey, he took up his line of march on the 31st, with a reinforcement for the column of General Wool. On the 2d of February he reached Saltillo, and on the 4th proceeded to Agua Nueva, twenty miles south of that city, on the San Luis road, where he encamped until the 21st. On this day, having learned from McCulloch's spies that the Mexicans were advancing in force, he fell back twelve miles nearer to Saltillo, to a better position in a defile of the mountains called Angostura, and facing the hacienda of Buena Vista. At this place he awaited the approach of Santa Anna, then within one day's march of it.

The army of Santa Anna, when organized by him at San Luis, was composed, according to Mexican authorities, of the following corps:—

|                                                                                                                         |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Sappers, miners, and artillerists, with nineteen guns of heavy calibre...                                               | 650           |
| First, third, fourth, fifth, tenth, and eleventh regiments of the line, and<br>first and third of light troops.         | 6,240         |
| Fourth light troops, first active Celaya; ditto of Guadalajara; ditto<br>of Lagos; ditto of Queretaro; ditto of Mexico. | 3,200         |
| Parrodi's division, with three pieces of heavy artillery.....                                                           | 1,000         |
| Cavalry, (on the march).....                                                                                            | 6,000         |
| Artillery, (on the march).....                                                                                          | 250           |
| Mejia's division .....                                                                                                  | 4,000         |
| <b>Total .....</b>                                                                                                      | <b>21,340</b> |

The brigades of Generals Minon and Juvera are not included in this enumeration, but it was diminished about one thousand by casualties, sickness, and desertion on the march.

To oppose the advance of this army—of the force of which Taylor was not informed—he had at Buena Vista the following corps:—

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| First Dragoons .....        | 114        |
| Second Dragoons .....       | 72         |
| Arkansas Cavalry .....      | 392        |
| Kentucky Cavalry.....       | 265        |
| <b>Total Cavalry.....</b>   | <b>843</b> |
| Third Artillery.....        | 142        |
| Fourth Artillery.....       | 106        |
| <b>Total Artillery.....</b> | <b>248</b> |







GILBERT & GIBSON SC.

TAYLOR AT BUENA VISTA.

|                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Artillery and Cavalry .....    | 1091 |
| Second Kentucky Infantry ..... | 516  |
| Mississippi Riflemen .....     | 328  |
| Indiana Brigade .....          | 1036 |
| First Illinois Foot .....      | 519  |
| Second Illinois Foot .....     | 496  |
| <hr/>                          |      |
| Total Foot .....               | 2895 |
| Texas Volunteers .....         | 53   |
| McCulloch's Spies .....        | 24   |
| <hr/>                          |      |
| Total Regiments or Corps ..... | 4063 |
| General Staff .....            | 10   |
| <hr/>                          |      |
| Total effective force .....    | 4073 |

Thus, the American army under Taylor was one-fifth the numerical force of the Mexican army under Santa Anna, when the latter approached the field of Buena Vista.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Taylor's Position at Buena Vista—Washington's Birth-day—Summons of Santa Anna to Taylor to Surrender—The Reply—Taylor's Detailed Report of the Battle—His order of Battle on the 22d—Skirmishes—Minon's Cavalry in the Rear—Battle on the 23d—Attack of the Enemy on the Left and Centre—Partial success of the Attack—Service of the Artillery—Repulse of the Enemy—Ruse of Santa Anna—Death of Yell and Vaughan—Renewed Attacks of the Enemy—Bragg's Battery—The Day saved—Death of Hardin, McKee, Lincoln, and Clay—Incidents after the Battle—Comparative Losses—General Wool and other Officers and Corps distinguished—Official Return of Loss—Private Letter to General Butler—Taylor's Views of the Battle—Congratulatory Orders—Letters to Henry Clay and Governor Lincoln—Rejoicings in the United States—Mr. Crittenden—Repulse of Urrea and Romaro by Major Giddings—Taylor's pursuit of them—Return to his Head-quarters—Public Estimation of Taylor—The Presidency—His Personal Views as a Candidate—Concluding Remarks on his Character.

THE position selected by General Taylor to receive with his small army of volunteers the vastly superior force of the Mexican chief, was one of remarkable natural strength. It was at a point where the main road from San Luis to Saltillo passes between closely approximating chains of mountains. The

### 300 TAYLOR SUMMONED TO SURRENDER.

bases of these mountains are cut, by the occasional torrents of rain, into numerous deep gullies, almost impassable, owing to the ruggedness and steepness of the banks, leaving between them elevated table-lands, or plateaus, of various extent. On the west of the road, and nearly parallel to it, between Agua Nueva and Buena Vista, is also a ditch, forming one of the mountain drains on that side. The American army was drawn up at nearly right angles to the road, its chief force being on the east of it, occupying a large plateau commanding the mountain side. Facing the south, this force constituted the left wing. A battery of light artillery occupied the road, and the right wing rested on the opposite hill.

In this attitude General Taylor awaited the advance of Santa Anna, on the morning of the 22d of February, a day dear to American memories, as that which gave Washington to his country. It is reasonable to believe that it was not forgotten on the field of Buena Vista; and that the four thousand men there arrayed to oppose five times their number, and to hear for the first time the din of hostile arms, recalled the name of him whose glory is a heritage worthy of a nation's dearest blood. The enemy was soon descried moving in large masses, the host of cavalry conspicuous from the forest of their lances glittering under a cloudless sun. An hour before noon the head of their columns had approached within two miles of the American position. At this movement a white flag was seen advancing from the Mexican front, and its bearer was soon in the presence of General Taylor. He presented the General the following letter:

Camp at Encantada, February 22, 1847.

God and Liberty!

You are surrounded by 20,000 men, and cannot, in any human probability, avoid suffering a rout, and being cut to pieces with your troops; but as you deserve consideration and particular esteem, I wish to save you from a catastrophe, and for that purpose give you this notice, in order that you may surrender at discretion, under the assurance that you will be treated with the consideration belonging to the Mexican char-



# BATTLE-GROUND AND VICINITY OF BUENA VISTA.

FEBRUARY 22d AND 23d, 1847.



## REFERENCES.

- A. Right of the American Army.
- B. Battery of light artillery posted on the road.
- C. Left of the American Army on the "plateau."
- D. D. Mexican Army before the battle on the 22d.

(To face page 300.)



acter, to which end you will be granted an hour's time to make up your mind, to commence from the moment when my flag of truce arrives in your camp.

With this view, I assure you of my particular consideration.

ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA.

To General Z. TAYLOR,

Commanding the Forces of the U. S.

To this summons General Taylor immediately replied in these terms—an admirable example of decision without presumption.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Near Buena Vista, February 22, 1847.

SIR: In reply to your note of this date, summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request.

With high respect, I am, sir, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major General U. S. Army, commanding.

SEÑOR GEN. D. ANTONIA LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA,

Commander-in-chief, La Encantada.

With this introduction to the battle of Buena Vista, General Taylor's detailed report of it is given, as sufficiently comprehensive, and the most proper for these pages.

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.

Agua Nueva, March 6, 1847.

SIR: I have the honour to submit a detailed report of the operations of the forces under my command, which resulted in the engagement of Buena Vista, the repulse of the Mexican army, and the reoccupation of this position.

The information which reached me of the advance and concentration of a heavy Mexican force in my front, had assumed such a probable form, as to induce a special examination far beyond the reach of our pickets to ascertain its correctness. A small party of Texan spies, under Major McCulloch, despatched to the hacienda of Encarnacion, thirty miles from this, on the route to San Luis Potosi, had reported a cavalry force of unknown strength at that place. On the 20th of February, a



strong reconnoissance under Lieutenant Colonel May was despatched to the hacienda of Heclionda, while Major McCulloch made another examination of Encarnación. The result of these expeditions left no doubt that the enemy was in large force at Encarnación, under the orders of General Santa Anna, and that he meditated a forward movement and attack upon our position.

As the camp of Agua Nueva could be turned on either flank, and as the enemy's force was greatly superior to our own, particularly in the arm of cavalry, I determined, after much consideration, to take up a position about eleven miles in rear, and there await the attack. The army broke up its camp and marched at noon on the 21st, encamping at the new position a little in front of the hacienda of Buena Vista. With a small force I proceeded to Saltillo, to make some necessary arrangements for the defence of the town, leaving Brigadier General Wool in the immediate command of the troops.

Before those arrangements were completed, on the morning of the 22d, I was advised that the enemy was in sight, advancing. Upon reaching the ground it was found that his cavalry advance was in our front, having marched from Encarnación, as we have since learned, at 11 o'clock on the day previous, and driving in a mounted force left at Agua Nueva to cover the removal of public stores. Our troops were in position, occupying a line of remarkable strength. The road at this point becomes a narrow defile, the valley on its right being rendered quite impracticable for artillery by a system of deep and impassable gullies, while on the left a succession of rugged ridges and precipitous ravines extends far back toward the mountain which bounds the valley. The features of the ground were such as nearly to paralyze the artillery and cavalry of the enemy, while his infantry could not derive all the advantage of its numerical superiority. In this position we prepared to receive him. Captain Washington's battery (4th artillery) was posted to command the road, while the 1st and 2d Illinois regiments, under Colonels Hardin and Bissell, each eight companies (to the latter of which was attached Captain Conner's

company of Texas volunteers), and the 2d Kentucky, under Colonel McKee, occupied the crests of the ridges on the left and in rear. The Arkansas and Kentucky regiments of cavalry, commanded by Colonels Yell and H. Marshall, occupied the extreme left near the base of the mountain, while the Indiana brigade, under Brigadier General Lane (composed of the 2d and 3d regiments, under Colonels Bowles and Lane), the Mississippi riflemen, under Colonel Davis, the squadrons of the 1st and 2d dragoons, under Captain Steen and Lieutenant Colonel May, and the light batteries of Captains Sherman and Bragg, 3d artillery, were held in reserve.

At eleven o'clock I received from General Santa Anna a summons to surrender at discretion, which, with a copy of my reply, I have already transmitted. The enemy still forbore his attack, evidently waiting for the arrival of his rear columns, which could be distinctly seen by our look-outs as they approached the field. A demonstration made on his left caused me to detach the 2d Kentucky regiment and a section of artillery to our right, in which position they bivouacked for the night. In the mean time the Mexican light troops had engaged ours on the extreme left (composed of parts of the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry dismounted, and a rifle battalion from the Indiana brigade, under Major Gorman, the whole commanded by Colonel Marshall), and kept up a sharp fire, climbing the mountain side, and apparently endeavouring to gain our flank. Three pieces of Captain Washington's battery had been detached to the left, and were supported by the 2d Indiana regiment. An occasional shell was thrown by the enemy into this part of our line, but without effect. The skirmishing of the light troops was kept up with trifling loss on our part until dark, when I became convinced that no serious attack would be made before the morning, and returned, with the Mississippi regiment and squadron of 2d dragoons, to Saltillo. The troops bivouacked without fires, and laid upon their arms. A body of cavalry, some 1500 strong, had been visible all day in rear of the town, having entered the valley through a narrow pass east of the city. This cavalry, commanded by General

Minon, had evidently been thrown in our rear to break up and harass our retreat, and perhaps make some attempt against the town if practicable. The city was occupied by four excellent companies of Illinois volunteers, under Major Warren of the 1st regiment. A field-work, which commanded most of the approaches, was garrisoned by Captain Webster's company, 1st artillery, and armed with two twenty-four-pound howitzers, while the train and head-quarter camp was guarded by two companies of Mississippi riflemen, under Captain Rogers, and a field-piece commanded by Captain Shover, 3d artillery. Having made these dispositions for the protection of the rear, I proceeded on the morning of the 23d to Buena Vista, ordering forward all the other available troops. The action had commenced before my arrival on the field.

During the evening and night of the 22d, the enemy had thrown a body of light troops on the mountain side, with the purpose of outflanking our left; and it was here that the action of the 23d commenced at an early hour. Our riflemen, under Colonel Marshall, who had been reinforced by three companies under Major Trail, 2d Illinois volunteers, maintained their ground handsomely against a greatly superior force, holding themselves under cover, and using their weapons with deadly effect. About eight o'clock a strong demonstration was made against the centre of our position, a heavy column moving along the road. This force was soon dispersed by a few rapid and well-directed shots from Captain Washington's battery. In the mean time the enemy was concentrating a large force of infantry and cavalry under cover of the ridges, with the obvious intention of forcing our left, which was posted on an extensive plateau. The 2d Indiana and 2d Illinois regiments formed this part of our line, the former covering three pieces of light artillery, under the orders of Captain O'Brien—Brigadier General Lane being in the immediate command. In order to bring his men within effective range, General Lane ordered the artillery and 2d Indiana regiment forward. The artillery advanced within musket range of a heavy body of Mexican infantry, and was served against it with great effect, but without being able



to check its advance. The infantry ordered to its support had fallen back in disorder, being exposed, as well as the battery, not only to a severe fire of small arms from the front, but also to a murderous cross-fire of grape and canister from a Mexican battery on the left. Captain O'Brien found it impossible to retain his position without support, but was only able to withdraw two of his pieces, all the horses and cannoneers of the third piece being killed or disabled. The 2d Indiana regiment, which had fallen back as stated, could not be rallied, and took no farther part in the action, except a handful of men, who, under its gallant colonel, Bowles, joined the Mississippi regiment, and did good service, and those fugitives who, at a later period in the day, assisted in defending the train and depot at Buena Vista. This portion of our line having given way, and the enemy appearing in overwhelming force against our left flank, the light troops which had rendered such good service on the mountain were compelled to withdraw, which they did, for the most part, in good order. Many, however, were not rallied until they reached the depot at Buena Vista, to the defence of which they afterward contributed.

Colonel Bissell's regiment (2d Illinois), which had been joined by a section of Captain Sherman's battery, had become completely outflanked, and was compelled to fall back, being entirely unsupported. The enemy was now pouring masses of infantry and cavalry along the base of the mountain on our left, and was gaining our rear in great force. At this moment I arrived upon the field. The Mississippi regiment had been directed to the left before reaching the position, and immediately came into action against the Mexican infantry which had turned our flank. The 2d Kentucky regiment, and a section of artillery under Captain Bragg, had previously been ordered from the right to reinforce our left, and arrived at a most opportune moment. That regiment, and a portion of the 1st Illinois, under Colonel Hardin, gallantly drove the enemy, and recovered a portion of the ground we had lost. The batteries of Captains Sherman and Bragg were in position on the plateau, and did much execution, not only in front, but particu-

larly upon the masses which had gained our rear. Discovering that the enemy was heavily pressing upon the Mississippi regiment, the 3d Indiana regiment, under Colonel Lane, was despatched to strengthen that part of our line, which formed a crotchet perpendicular to the first line of battle. At the same time Lieutenant Kilburn, with a piece of Captain Bragg's battery, was directed to support the infantry there engaged. The action was, for a long time, warmly sustained at that point—the enemy making several efforts, both with infantry and cavalry, against our line, and being always repulsed with heavy loss. I had placed all the regular cavalry, and Captain Pike's squadron of Arkansas horse, under the orders of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel May, with directions to hold in check the enemy's column, still advancing to the rear along the base of the mountain, which was done in conjunction with the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry under Colonels Marshall and Yell.

In the mean time our left, which was still strongly threatened by a superior force, was farther strengthened by the detachment of Captain Bragg's, and a portion of Captain Sherman's batteries to that quarter. The concentration of artillery fire upon the masses of the enemy along the base of the mountain, and the determined resistance offered by the two regiments opposed to them, had created confusion in their ranks, and some of the corps attempted to effect a retreat upon their main line of battle. The squadron of the 1st dragoons, under Lieutenant Rucker, was now ordered up the deep ravine which these retreating corps were endeavouring to cross, in order to charge and disperse them. The squadron proceeded to the point indicated, but could not accomplish the object, being exposed to a heavy fire from a battery established to cover the retreat of those corps. While the squadron was detached on this service, a large body of the enemy was observed to concentrate on our extreme left, apparently with the view of making a descent upon the hacienda of Buena Vista, where our train and baggage were deposited. Lieutenant Colonel May was ordered to the support of that point, with two pieces of Captain Sherman's battery under Lieutenant Reynolds. In the mean time,

the scattered forces near the hacienda, composed in part of Majors Trail and Gorman's commands, had been, to some extent, organized under the advice of Major Munroe, chief of artillery, with the assistance of Major Morrison, volunteer staff, and were posted to defend the position. Before our cavalry had reached the hacienda, that of the enemy had made its attack; having been handsomely met by the Kentucky and Arkansas cavalry under Colonels Marshall and Yell. The Mexican column immediately divided, one portion sweeping by the depot, where it received a destructive fire from the force which had collected there, and then gaining the mountain opposite, under a fire from Lieutenant Reynold's section, the remaining portion regaining the base of the mountain on our left. In the charge at Buena Vista, Colonel Yell fell gallantly at the head of his regiment; we also lost Adjutant Vaughan, of the Kentucky cavalry—a young officer of much promise. Lieutenant Colonel May, who had been rejoined by the squadron of the 1st dragoons, and by portions of the Arkansas and Indiana troops, under Lieutenant Colonel Roane and Major Gorman, now approached the base of the mountain, holding in check the right flank of the enemy, upon whose masses, crowded in the narrow gorges and ravines, our artillery was doing fearful execution.

The position of that portion of the Mexican army which had gained our rear was now very critical, and it seemed doubtful whether it could regain the main body. At this moment I received from General Santa Anna a message by a staff officer, desiring to know what I wanted? I immediately despatched Brigadier General Wool to the Mexican general-in-chief, and sent orders to cease firing. Upon reaching the Mexican lines General Wool could not cause the enemy to cease their fire, and accordingly returned without having an interview. The extreme right of the enemy continued its retreat along the base of the mountain, and finally, in spite of all our efforts, effected a junction with the remainder of the army.

During the day, the cavalry of General Minon had ascended the elevated plain above Saltillo, and occupied the road from



the city to the field of battle, where they intercepted several of our men. Approaching the town, they were fired upon by Captain Webster from the redoubt occupied by his company, and then moved off towards the eastern side of the valley, and obliquely towards Buena Vista. At this time, Captain Shover moved rapidly forward with his piece, supported by a miscellaneous command of mounted volunteers, and fired several shots at the cavalry with great effect. They were driven into the ravines which lead to the lower valley, closely pursued by Captain Shover, who was farther supported by a piece of Captain Webster's battery, under Lieutenant Donaldson, which had advanced from the redout, supported by Captain Wheeler's company of Illinois volunteers. The enemy made one or two efforts to charge the artillery, but was finally driven back in a confused mass, and did not again appear upon the plain.

In the mean time, the firing had partially ceased upon the principal field. The enemy seemed to confine his efforts to the protection of his artillery, and I had left the plateau for a moment, when I was recalled thither by a very heavy musketry fire. On regaining that position, I discovered that our infantry (Illinois and 2d Kentucky) had engaged a greatly superior force of the enemy—evidently his reserve—and that they had been overwhelmed by numbers. The moment was most critical. Captain O'Brien, with two pieces, had sustained this heavy charge to the last, and was finally obliged to leave his guns on the field—his infantry support being entirely routed. Captain Bragg, who had just arrived from the left, was ordered at once into battery. Without any infantry to support him, and at the imminent risk of losing his guns, this officer came rapidly into action, the Mexican line being but a few yards from the muzzle of his pieces. The first discharge of canister caused the enemy to hesitate, the second and third drove him back in disorder, and saved the day. The 2d Kentucky regiment, which had advanced beyond supporting distance in this affair, was driven back and closely pressed by the enemy's cavalry. Taking a ravine which led in the direction of Captain Washington's battery, their pursuers became exposed to his fire, which soon

checked and drove them back with loss. In the mean time, the rest of our artillery had taken position on the plateau, covered by the Mississippi and 3d Indiana regiments, the former of which had reached the ground in time to pour a fire into the right flank of the enemy, and thus contribute to his repulse. In this last conflict we had the misfortune to sustain a very heavy loss. Colonel Hardin, 1st Illinois, and Colonel McKee and Lieutenant Colonel Clay, 2d Kentucky regiment, fell at this time while gallantly leading their commands.

No farther attempt was made by the enemy to force our position, and the approach of night gave an opportunity to pay proper attention to the wounded, and also to refresh the soldiers, who had been exhausted by incessant watchfulness and combat. Though the night was severely cold, the troops were compelled for the most to bivouack without fires, expecting that morning would renew the conflict. During the night the wounded were removed to Saltillo, and every preparation made to receive the enemy, should he again attack our position. Seven fresh companies were drawn from the town, and Brigadier General Marshall, with a reinforcement of Kentucky cavalry and four heavy guns, under Captain Prentiss, 1st artillery, was near at hand, when it was discovered that the enemy had abandoned his position during the night. Our scouts soon ascertained that he had fallen back upon Agua Nueva. The great disparity of numbers, and the exhaustion of our troops, rendered it inexpedient and hazardous to attempt pursuit. A staff officer was despatched to General Santa Anna to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, which was satisfactorily completed on the following day. Our own dead were collected and buried, and the Mexican wounded, of which a large number had been left upon the field, were removed to Saltillo, and rendered as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

On the evening of the 26th, a close reconnoissance was made of the enemy's position, which was found to be occupied only by a small body of cavalry, the infantry and artillery having retreated in the direction of San Luis Potosi. On the 27th, our troops resumed their former camp at Agua Nueva, the

enemy's rear-guard evacuating the place as we approached, leaving a considerable number of wounded. It was my purpose to beat up his quarters at Encarnacion early the next morning, but upon examination, the weak condition of the cavalry horses rendered it unadvisable to attempt so long a march without water. A command was finally despatched to Encarnacion, on the 1st of March, under Colonel Belknap. Some two hundred wounded, and about sixty Mexican soldiers were found there, the army having passed on in the direction of Matehuala, with greatly reduced numbers, and suffering much from hunger. The dead and dying were strewed upon the road and crowded the buildings of the hacienda.

The American force engaged in the action of Buena Vista is shown, by the accompanying field report, to have been 344 officers, and 4425 men, exclusive of the small command left in and near Saltillo. Of this number, two squadrons of cavalry and three batteries of light artillery, making not more than 453 men, composed the only force of regular troops. The strength of the Mexican army is stated by General Santa Anna, in his summons, to be 20,000; and that estimate is confirmed by all the information since obtained. Our loss is 267 killed, 456 wounded, and 23 missing. Of the numerous wounded, many did not require removal to the hospital, and it is hoped that a comparatively small number will be permanently disabled. The Mexican loss in killed and wounded may be fairly estimated at 1500, and will probably reach 2000. At least 500 of their killed were left upon the field of battle. We have no means of ascertaining the number of deserters and dispersed men from their ranks, but it is known to be very great.

Our loss has been especially severe in officers, twenty-eight having been killed upon the field. We have to lament the death of Captain George Lincoln, Assistant Adjutant General, serving in the staff of General Wool—a young officer of high bearing and approved gallantry, who fell early in the action. No loss falls more heavily upon the army in the field than that of Colonels Hardin and McKee, and Lieutenant Colonel Clay. Possessing, in a remarkable degree, the confidence of their



commands, and the last two having enjoyed the advantage of a military education, I had looked particularly to them for support in case we met the enemy. I need not say that their zeal in engaging the enemy, and the cool and steadfast courage with which they maintained their positions during the day, fully realized my hopes, and caused me to feel yet more sensibly their untimely loss.

I perform a grateful duty in bringing to the notice of the government the general good conduct of the troops. Exposed for successive nights, without fires, to the severity of the weather, they were ever prompt and cheerful in the discharge of every duty; and finally displayed conspicuous steadiness and gallantry in repulsing, at great odds, a disciplined foe. While the brilliant success achieved by their arms releases me from the painful necessity of specifying many cases of bad conduct before the enemy, I feel an increased obligation to mention particular corps and officers, whose skill, coolness, and gallantry in trying situations, and under a continued and heavy fire, seem to merit particular notice.

To Brigadier General Wool my obligations are especially due. The high state of discipline and instruction of several of the volunteer regiments was attained under his command, and to his vigilance and arduous service before the action, and his gallantry and activity on the field, a large share of our success may justly be attributed. During most of the engagement he was in immediate command of the troops thrown back on our left flank. I beg leave to recommend him to the favourable notice of the government. Brigadier General Lane (slightly wounded) was active and zealous throughout the day, and displayed great coolness and gallantry before the enemy.

The services of the light artillery, always conspicuous, were more than usually distinguished. Moving rapidly over the roughest ground, it was always in action at the right place and the right time, and its well-directed fire dealt destruction in the masses of the enemy. While I recommend to particular favour the gallant conduct and valuable services of Major Munroe, chief of artillery, and Captains Washington, 4th artil-

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lery, and Sherman and Bragg, 3d artillery, commanding batteries, I deem it no more than just to mention all the subaltern officers. They were nearly all detached at different times, and in every situation exhibited conspicuous skill and gallantry. Captain O'Brien, Lieutenants Brent, Whiting, and Couch, 4th artillery, and Bryan, topographical engineers (slightly wounded), were attached to Captain Washington's battery. Lieutenants Thomas, Reynolds, and French, 3d artillery (severely wounded), to that of Captain Sherman; and Captain Shover and Lieutenant Kilburn, 3d artillery, to that of Captain Bragg. Captain Shover, in connection with Lieutenant Donaldson, 1st artillery, rendered gallant and important service in repulsing the cavalry of General Minon. The regular cavalry, under Lieutenant Colonel May, with which was associated Captain Pike's squadron of Arkansas horse, rendered useful service in holding the enemy in check, and in covering the batteries at several points. Captain Steen, 1st dragoons, was severely wounded early in the day, while gallantly endeavouring, with my authority, to rally the troops which were falling to the rear.

The Mississippi riflemen, under Colonel Davis, were highly conspicuous for their gallantry and steadiness, and sustained throughout the engagement the reputation of veteran troops. Brought into action against an immensely superior force, they maintained themselves for a long time unsupported and with heavy loss, and held an important part of the field until reinforced. Colonel Davis, though severely wounded, remained in the saddle until the close of the action. His distinguished coolness and gallantry at the head of his regiment on this day entitle him to the particular notice of the government. The 3d Indiana regiment, under Colonel Lane, and a fragment of the 2d, under Colonel Bowles, were associated with the Mississippi regiment during the greater portion of the day, and acquitted themselves creditably in repulsing the attempts of the enemy to break that portion of our line. The Kentucky cavalry, under Colonel Marshall, rendered good service dismounted, acting as light troops on our left, and afterward, with a portion

of the Arkansas regiment, in meeting and dispersing the column of cavalry at Buena Vista. The 1st and 2d Illinois, and the 2d Kentucky regiments, served immediately under my eye, and I bear a willing testimony to their excellent conduct throughout the day. The spirit and gallantry with which the 1st Illinois and 2d Kentucky engaged the enemy in the morning, restored confidence to that part of the field, while the list of casualties will show how much these three regiments suffered in sustaining the heavy charge of the enemy in the afternoon. Captain Conner's company of Texas volunteers, attached to the 2d Illinois regiment, fought bravely, its captain being wounded and two subalterns killed. Colonel Bissell, the only surviving colonel of these regiments, merits notice for his coolness and bravery on this occasion. After the fall of the field-officers of the 1st Illinois and 2d Kentucky regiments, the command of the former devolved upon Lieutenant Colonel Weatherford; that of the latter upon Major Fry.

Regimental commanders and others who have rendered reports, speak in general terms of the good conduct of their officers and men, and have specified many names, but the limits of this report forbid a recapitulation of them here. I may, however, mention Lieutenants Rucker and Campbell of the dragoons, and Captain Pike, Arkansas cavalry, commanding squadrons; Lieutenant Colonel Field, Kentucky cavalry; Lieutenant Colonel Roane, Arkansas cavalry, upon whom the command devolved after the fall of Colonel Yell; Major Bradford, Captain Sharpe (severely wounded), and Adjutant Griffith, Mississippi regiment; Lieutenant Colonel Hadden, 2d Indiana regiment, and Lieutenant Robinson, aid-de-camp to General Lane; Lieutenant Colonel Weatherford, 1st Illinois regiment; Lieutenant Colonel Morrison, Major Trail, and Adjutant White-side (severely wounded), 2d Illinois regiment; and Major Fry, 2d Kentucky regiment, as being favourably noticed for gallantry and good conduct. Major McCulloch, quartermaster in the volunteer service, rendered important services before the engagement, in the command of a spy company, and during the affair was associated with the regular cavalry. To Major War-



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ren, 1st Illinois volunteers, I feel much indebted for his firm and judicious course, while exercising command in Saltillo.

The medical staff, under the able direction of Assistant Surgeon Hitchcock, were assiduous in attention to the wounded upon the field, and in their careful removal to the rear. Both in these respects, and in the subsequent organization and service of the hospitals, the administration of this department was every thing that could be wished.

Brigadier General Wool speaks in high terms of the officers of his staff, and I take pleasure in mentioning them here, having witnessed their activity and zeal upon the field. Lieutenant and Aid-de-camp McDowell, Colonel Churchill, inspector general, Captain Chapman, assistant quartermaster, Lieutenant Sitgreaves, topographical engineers, and Captains Howard and Davis, volunteer service, are conspicuously noticed by the General for their gallantry and good conduct. Messrs. March, Addicks, Potts, Harrison, Burgess, and Dusenbery, attached in various capacities to General Wool's head-quarters, are likewise mentioned for their intelligent alacrity in conveying orders to all parts of the field.

In conclusion, I beg leave to speak of my own staff, to whose exertions in rallying troops and communicating orders I feel greatly indebted. Major Bliss, assistant adjutant general, Captain J. H. Eaton, and Lieutenant R. S. Garnett, aids-de-camp, served near my person, and were prompt and zealous in the discharge of every duty. Major Munroe, beside rendering valuable service as chief of artillery, was active and instrumental, as were also Colonels Churchill and Belknap, inspectors general, in rallying troops and disposing them for the defence of the train and baggage. Colonel Whiting, quartermaster general, and Captain Eaton, chief of the subsistence department, were engaged with the duties of their departments, and also served in my immediate staff on the field. Captain Sibley, assistant quartermaster, was necessarily left with the head-quarter camp near town, where his services were highly useful. Major Mansfield and Lieutenant Benham, engineers, and Captain Linnard and Lieutenants Pope and Franklin, topographical engineers, were employed before and during the en-





FIELD AFTER THE BATTLE.



gagement in making reconnoissances, and on the field were very active in bringing information and in conveying my orders to distant points. Lieutenant Kingsbury, in addition to his proper duties as ordnance officer, Captain Chilton, assistant quartermaster, and Majors Dix and Coffee, served also as extra aids-de-camp, and were actively employed in the transmission of orders. Mr. Thomas L. Crittenden, of Kentucky, though not in service, volunteered as my aid-de-camp on this occasion, and served with credit in that capacity. Major Craig, chief of ordnance, and Surgeon Craig, medical director, had been detached on duty from head-quarters, and did not reach the ground until the morning of the 24th, too late to participate in the action, but in time to render useful services in their respective departments of the staff.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major General U. S. A. commanding.

The Adjutant General of the Army, Washington, D. C."

ABSTRACT OF RETURNS OF KILLED, WOUNDED, AND MISSING, IN  
THE BATTLE.

| CORPS.                  | KILLED.                |                |            | WOUNDED.               |                |            | KILLED, WOUNDED,<br>AND MISSING. |                |            |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------|------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------|
|                         | Commissioned Officers. | Rank and File. | Aggregate. | Commissioned Officers. | Rank and File. | Aggregate. | Commissioned Officers.           | Rank and File. | Aggregate. |
| General Staff .....     | 1                      |                | 1 ...      | 3                      |                | 3 ...      | 4                                |                | 4          |
| First Dragoons .....    |                        |                | ...        | 1                      | 6              | 7 ...      | 1                                | 6              | 7          |
| Second Dragoons ....    |                        |                | ...        | 1                      | 1              | 2 ...      | 1                                | 1              | 2          |
| Third Artillery .....   |                        | 1              | 1 ...      | 1                      | 21             | 22 ...     | 1                                | 24             | 25         |
| Fourth Artillery .....  |                        | 5              | 5 ...      | 1                      | 20             | 21 ...     | 1                                | 25             | 26         |
| Mississippi Rifles .... | 2                      | 38             | 40 ...     | 5                      | 51             | 56 ...     | 7                                | 91             | 98         |
| Kentucky Cavalry ...    | 1                      | 26             | 27 ...     | 5                      | 29             | 34 ...     | 6                                | 55             | 61         |
| Arkansas Cavalry ...    | 2                      | 15             | 17 ...     | 1                      | 31             | 32 ...     | 3                                | 50             | 53         |
| Second Ken. Foot ...    | 3                      | 41             | 44 ...     | 3                      | 54             | 57 ...     | 6                                | 96             | 102        |
| First Ill. Foot .....   | 3                      | 26             | 29 ...     | 2                      | 16             | 18 ...     | 5                                | 42             | 47         |
| Second Ill. Foot .....  | 10                     | 38             | 48 ...     | 6                      | 69             | 75 ...     | 16                               | 110            | 126        |
| Second Ind. Foot ....   | 3                      | 29             | 32 ...     | 8                      | 63             | 71 ...     | 11                               | 96             | 107        |
| Third Ind. Foot .....   | 1                      | 8              | 9 ...      | 3                      | 53             | 56 ...     | 4                                | 61             | 65         |
| Company Texas Vol.,     | 2                      | 12             | 14 ...     | 1                      | 1              | 2 ...      | 3                                | 20             | 23         |
| Grand total .....       | 28                     | 239            | 267 ...    | 415                    | 41             | 456 ...    | 69                               | 677            | 746        |

The action thus officially and generally described, was in some respects distinguished above any other in which Taylor had commanded—and it may be added any other which had ever been fought on this continent. The enemy's forces were five to one of the American, and every arm proportionably superior. Although Taylor's position was a strong one, it was not impregnable from the mere nature of the ground, as the temporary success of the Mexicans on his left sufficiently proved. Thrice during the day that success seemed complete, when their vast numbers—scores sometimes against units—pressed forward with courage and energy, lacking only the indomitable perseverance of their foes to make victory secure. But the fire of the latter, maintained with precision and rapidity, as long as a man remained to serve a gun, was more than Mexican firmness could endure. The spirit which stormed the heights of Monterey, which rushed into its streets when the metal sleet from its forts and barricades swept down all before it—that spirit was not theirs. Their courage could approach or follow success, but was unequal to the task of defying defeat.

In a private letter to General E. G. W. Butler, General Taylor thus referred to certain incidents of the battle. The concluding passages will arrest attention, as proof of the singularly hazardous position in which he had been placed by the withdrawal of his regular troops :

“In the morning of the 23d, at sunrise, the enemy renewed the contest with an overwhelming force—with artillery, infantry, and dragoons—which lasted with slight intermissions until dark. A portion of the time the conflict was much the severest I have ever witnessed, particularly towards the latter part of the day, when he (Santa Anna) brought up his reserve, and in spite of every effort on our part, after the greatest exertions I have ever witnessed on both sides, drove us by an immense superiority of numbers for some distance. He had at least five to one at that point against us. Fortunately, at the most critical moment, two pieces of artillery which I had ordered up to support that part of our line, met our exhausted

men retreating, when they were brought into battery and opened on the enemy, then within fifty yards in hot pursuit, with canister and grape, which brought him to a halt and soon compelled him to fall back. In this tremendous contest we lost three pieces of artillery, nearly all the men having been killed or crippled, which put it out of our power to bring them off; nor did I deem it advisable to attempt to regain them.

"The enemy made his principal efforts against our flanks. He was handsomely repulsed on our right, but succeeded early in the day in gaining our left, in consequence of the giving way of one of the volunteer regiments, which could not be rallied; with but few exceptions, the greater portion retiring about a mile to a large rancho or farm-house, where our wagons and a portion of our stores were left. These were soon after attacked by the enemy's cavalry, who were repulsed with some loss.

"For several hours the fate of the day was extremely doubtful; so much so that I was urged by some of the most experienced officers to fall back and take a new position. This I knew it would never do to attempt with volunteers, and at once declined it. The scene had now become one of the deepest interest. Between the several deep ravines, there were portions of level land from one to four hundred yards in extent, which became alternately points of attack and defence, after our left was turned, by both sides. These extended along and near the base of the mountain for about two miles, and the struggle for them may be very appropriately compared to a game of chess. Night put a stop to the contest, and, strange to say, both armies occupied the same positions they did in the morning before the battle commenced. Our artillery did more than wonders.

"We lay on our arms all night, as we had done the two previous ones, without fires, there being no wood to be had, and the mercury below the freezing point, ready and expecting to renew the contest the next morning; but we found at daylight the enemy had retreated during the night, leaving his killed and many of his wounded for us to bury and take care of—carrying off every thing else, and taking up a position at



this place. We did not think it advisable to pursue, not knowing whether he would renew the attack, continue his retreat, or wished to draw us from our strong position ; but contented ourselves with watching his movements closely.

“The loss on both sides was very great, as you may suppose—enough so on ours to cover the whole country with mourning, for some of the noblest and purest of the land have fallen. We had two hundred and forty killed, and five hundred wounded. The enemy has suffered in still greater numbers, but as the dead and wounded are scattered all over the country, it is difficult to ascertain their number. The prisoners who have fallen into our hands, between two and three hundred—enough to exchange for all that have been taken from us—as well as some medical officers left behind to take care of the wounded, say that their killed and wounded is not less than fifteen hundred, and they say perhaps more.

“I hope the greater portion of the good people of the country will be satisfied with what we have done on this occasion. I flatter myself that our compelling a Mexican army of more than twenty thousand men, completely organized, and led by their chief magistrate, to retreat, with less than five hundred regulars and about four thousand volunteers, will meet their approval. I had not a single company of regular infantry ; the whole was taken from me.”

Three days after the battle, General Taylor issued the following congratulatory orders :—

“1. The commanding general has the grateful task of congratulating the troops upon the brilliant success which attended their arms in the conflicts of the 22d and the 23d. Confident in the immense superiority of numbers, and stimulated by the presence of a distinguished leader, the Mexican troops were yet repulsed in efforts to force our lines, and finally withdrew with immense loss from the field.

“2. The general would express his obligations to the officers and men engaged, for the cordial support which they rendered throughout the action. It will be his highest pride to bring to the notice of the government the conspicuous gallantry

of different officers and corps, whose unwavering steadiness more than once saved the fortunes of the day. He would also express his high satisfaction with the conduct of the small command left to hold Saltillo. Though not so seriously engaged as their comrades, their services were very important and efficiently rendered. While bestowing this just tribute to the good conduct of the troops, the general deeply regrets to say that there were not a few exceptions. He trusts that those who fled ingloriously to Buena Vista, and even to Saltillo, will seek an opportunity to retrieve their reputation, and to emulate the bravery of their comrades who bore the brunt of the battle, and sustained, against fearful odds, the honour of our flag.

“The exultation of success is checked by the heavy sacrifice of life which it has cost, embracing many officers of high rank and rare merit. While the sympathies of a grateful country will be given to the bereaved families and friends of those who nobly fell, their illustrious example will remain for the benefit and admiration of the army.”

As the battle of Buena Vista was the most remarkable of Taylor's victories, so it was most memorable for its cost of blood and life. The limits of this volume are already so extended, that it is necessary to forego the grateful labour of recording instances of singular devotion and heroism on the part of many officers and corps. The official report, already quoted, distinguishes the most notable of these—instances which in the history of war, ever painful, ever deplorable, may well be the theme of a nation's pride and gratitude. There are a few, however, of the noble dead, whom General Taylor's peculiar regard has distinguished by tributes to their memory, too honourable to himself to be omitted here. These tributes are the annexed letters:—

“Head-Quarters, Agua Nueva, March 1, 1847.”

“MY DEAR SIR:—You will no doubt have received, before this can reach you, the deeply distressing intelligence of the death of your son in the battle of Buena Vista. It is with no wish of intruding upon the sanctuary of parental sorrow, and

with no hope of administering any consolation to your wounded heart, that I have taken the liberty of addressing you these few lines ; but I have felt it a duty which I owe to the memory of the distinguished dead, to pay a willing tribute to his many excellent qualities, and while my feelings are still fresh, to express the desolation which his untimely loss, and that of other kindred spirits, has occasioned.

“I had but a casual acquaintance with your son, until he became for a time a member of my military family, and I can truly say that no one ever won more rapidly upon my regard, or established a more lasting claim to my respect and esteem. Manly and honourable in every impulse, with no feeling but for the honour of the service and of the country, he gave every assurance that in the hour of need I could lean with confidence upon his support. Nor was I disappointed. Under the guidance of himself and the lamented McKee, gallantly did the sons of Kentucky, in the thickest of the strife, uphold the honour of the state and the country.

“A grateful people will do justice to the memory of those who fell on that eventful day. But I may be permitted to express the bereavement which I feel in the loss of valued friends. To your son I felt bound by the strongest ties of private regard, and when I miss his familiar face, and those of McKee and Hardin, I can say with truth, that I feel no exultation in our success.

“With the expression of my deepest and most heartfelt sympathies for your irreparable loss, I remain,

“Your friend,

“Z. TAYLOR.

“Honourable Henry Clay.”

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“Head-Quarters, Agua Nueva, April 3, 1847.

“SIR:—Your letter of the 4th ult., in relation to the remains and effects of your much lamented son, Captain George Lincoln, has safely reached me. I beg leave to offer my heartfelt sympathies with you in the heavy affliction which has



befallen you in the death of this accomplished gentleman. In his fall, you have been bereaved of a son of whom you might be most justly proud, while the army has lost one of its most gallant soldiers. It is hoped, however, that your deep grief will be assuaged in some degree in the proud reflection that he fell nobly upon the field of battle, while gallantly discharging the duties of his profession.

"I learn upon inquiry that the body of your son was carefully removed from the field immediately after his death, and that it was decently interred by itself. Its identity is therefore a matter of certainty. His effects are understood to have been collected with due care, and are now under the direction of General Wool.

"I shall take an early occasion to convey your wishes on this subject to that officer, with the request that he will be kind enough to put the remains and effects, carefully prepared for transportation, en route for New York or Boston, by the first safe opportunity, and that he give you, at the same time, due notice thereof,

"I am, Sir, with great respect,

"Your ob't serv't,

"Z. TAYLOR.

"Ex-Governor Lincoln, Massachusetts."

The news of the victory of Buena Vista was received in every part of the United States as the crowning evidence of Taylor's generalship. He had assumed the responsibility of holding his position beyond Monterey. Knowing his resources and trusting in his officers and troops, he hesitated not to risk every thing on the field against the host of Santa Anna. He has himself done justice to the brilliant part which General Wool bore in the action, approving all the preliminary dispositions of that able commander. He has also borne testimony to the services of all others who took part in the action. It was the province of the nation, in return, to acknowledge the surpassing merit of the commander-in-chief. That merit was acknowledged in every form of popular rejoicing and con-

gratulation. Cities and states were emulous in exhibitions of sympathy for his trials, exultation for his success, and respect for his character.

On the 2d of March, General Taylor entrusted to Mr. Crittenden the official reports of the battle of Buena Vista, to be conveyed to Washington. He was escorted by Major Giddings, commanding two hundred and sixty infantry, and two pieces of artillery, and having in charge also one hundred and fifty wagons. When within a mile of Seralvo, on the road from Monterey to Camargo, the escort, which was divided for the protection of the wagons, was attacked by sixteen hundred Mexican cavalry and infantry, under Generals Urrea and Romaro. After a brief and gallant struggle, the enemy was repulsed with the loss of forty-five killed and wounded. The loss in Major Giddings' command was seventeen men, fifteen of whom were teamsters. General Taylor, subsequently hearing that Urrea was in command of a still larger force, pursued him with a command of about twelve hundred Ohio and Virginia volunteers, a squadron of May's dragoons, and two companies of Bragg's artillery, as far as Caidereta, where he learned that the fugitives had crossed the mountains. General Taylor then returned to the camp at the Walnut Springs, three miles from Monterey, which, since that time has continued to be his head-quarters. The reduction of the number of his troops by the expiration of their terms of service, and by removal to other quarters, has prevented on his part any offensive operations in the direction of San Luis, if, indeed, such continued to be entertained, after the direct movement of General Scott upon the capital. For this reason, as no action of moment—compared with the great and stirring events of the Mexican war, prior to March—has occurred to excite renewed attention to the army under Taylor's command, it is not deemed necessary at present to record the incidents of its quiet occupation of the positions secured by the final victory of Buena Vista. When another land-mark in Taylor's career shall have been reared, it will be proper to follow his level progress in this interval.

From the time that the character of General Taylor's first achievements on the Rio Grande began to be appreciated in the United States, he was regarded by a large body of the people as a proper candidate for the Presidency. Monterey and Buena Vista confirmed the preference of many who had previously wavered. Numerous meetings, held in different parts of the Union, gave form and strength to this sentiment. Under the sanction of these meetings, as well as on individual responsibility, many letters were addressed to General Taylor, tendering formal nominations for the Presidency, or requesting a definition of his political opinions. To all these letters he has replied substantially in the same terms, expressing modestly his doubts concerning the propriety of undertaking an office for which he deems others more peculiarly fitted, and declining to accept any nomination for it, imposing pledges on his part to any political party. It is unnecessary to quote more than one of these letters of Taylor—which, as the latest from his pen, comprehends not only the declarations of those of earlier date, but contains a distinct avowal of his political partialities not previously expressed. This document is as follows :

Head-Quarters, Army of Occupation.  
Camp near Monterey, August 10, 1847.

SIR: Your letter of the 17th ultimo, requesting of me an exposition of my views on the questions of national policy now at issue between the political parties of the United States, has duly reached me.

I must take occasion to say that many of my letters, addressed to gentlemen in the United States in answer to similar inquiries, have already been made public, and I had greatly hoped that all persons interested had, by this time, obtained from them a sufficiently accurate knowledge of my views and desires in relation to this subject. As it appears, however, that such is not the case, I deem it proper, in reply to your letter, *distinctly to repeat that I am not before the People of the United States as a candidate for the next Presidency.* It is my great desire to return at the close of *this war* to the dis-



### 324 HIS DECLARATIONS ON THE SUBJECT.

charge of those professional duties and to the enjoyment of those domestic pursuits from which I was called at its commencement, and for which my tastes and education best fit me.

I deem it but due to candour to state, at the same time, that, if I were called to the Presidential Chair by *the general voice of the people, without regard to their political differences*, I should deem it to be my duty to accept the office. But while I freely avow my attachment to the administrative policy of our *early Presidents*, I desire it to be understood that I cannot submit, even in thus accepting it, to the exaction of any other pledge as to the course I should pursue than that of discharging its functions to the best of my ability, and strictly in accordance with the requirements of the *constitution*.

I have thus given you the circumstances under which only can I be induced to accept the high and responsible office of President of the United States. I need hardly add that I cannot in any case permit myself to be brought before the people exclusively by any of the political parties that now so unfortunately divide our country, as their candidate for this office.

It affords me great pleasure, in conclusion, fully to concur with you in your high and just estimate of the virtues, both of head and heart, of the distinguished citizens [MESSRS. CLAY, WEBSTER, ADAMS, McDUFFIE, and CALHOUN] mentioned in your letter. *I have never yet exercised the privilege of voting; but had I been called upon at the last Presidential election to do so, I should most certainly have cast my vote for Mr. Clay.*

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. TAYLOR,

Major General U. S. Army, commanding.

F. S. BRONSON, M. D., Charleston, S. C.

The concluding sentence of this letter sets at rest any doubt of Taylor's political principles, while it confirms unequivocally his former declarations to stand as a candidate for the President, if at all, independent of the obligations of a partizan.

In the attempt to trace through the preceding pages an out-

line of the public career of General Taylor, it has been necessary to touch lightly many points, and to omit others wholly, which would serve to illustrate his character. Its prominent traits, however, are sufficiently revealed to prove it a union of rare moral worth and mental power, assured by a physical temperament of the happiest mould. In considering Taylor's fitness for the exigencies in which he has been tried, we find a singular weight and balance of qualities; a vigorous constitution to endure hardships; firm nerves to brave danger; quick perception, forecast, prudence, invention, decision, independence, fortitude, and integrity. And all these gifts are made useful by tireless industry, and graceful by genuine modesty. For the duties of a profession, adopted in the generous ardour of youth, he has foregone, in the sober maturity of years, the tranquillity of home, the endearments of kindred, the luxuries of affluence. When the war, which still demands his exertions, shall have ceased, whether his own inclination may lead him to the retirement of private life, or the nation's desire place him on the highest platform of public responsibility, his services cannot be the less gratefully remembered, nor his virtues the more faithfully proved.

# ANECDOTES

## OF

### GENERAL TAYLOR.

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#### TAYLOR'S REPUBLICAN HABITS.

THE committee from New Orleans, which presented General Taylor a sword on behalf of their fellow-citizens, gave the following account of the interview: "We presented ourselves at the opening of one of the tents, before which was standing a dragoon's horse, much used by hard service. Upon a camp-stool at our left sat General ———, in busy conversation with a hearty-looking old gentleman, sitting on a box, cushioned with an Arkansas blanket, dressed in Attakapas pantaloons and a linen roundabout, and remarkable for a bright flashing eye, a high forehead, a farmer look, and 'rough and ready' appearance. It is hardly necessary for us to say that this personage was General Taylor, the commanding hero of two of the most remarkable battles on record, and the man who, by his firmness and decision of character, has shed lustre upon the American arms.

"There was no pomp about his tent; a couple of rough blue chests served for his table, upon which was strewn, in masterly confusion, a variety of official documents: a quiet-looking, citizen-dressed personage made his appearance upon hearing the significant call of 'Ben,' bearing, on a tin salver, a couple of black bottles and shining tumblers, arranged around an earthen pitcher of Rio Grande water. These refreshments were deposited upon a stool, and we 'helped ourselves,' by invitation. We bore to the general a complimentary gift from some of his fellow-citizens of New Orleans, which he declined receiving for the present; giving at the same time a short but 'hard sense' lecture on the impropriety of naming children and places after men before they were dead, or of his receiving a present for his services 'before the campaign, so far as he was concerned, was finished.'

"With the highest possible admiration of the republican simplicity of the manners and character of General Taylor, we bade him good-day, with a higher appreciation of our native land, for possessing such a man as a citizen, and of its institutions for moulding such a character."

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The following anecdote is told by a correspondent of the Pennsylvania Inquirer: "During the Florida campaign, a certain young officer, after receiving his commission, was ordered to join the army in that quarter. His first duty was, of course, to report himself to General Taylor. After a very tedious journey, however, through the woods, our officer arrived at a small shanty, called a tavern, about fifty miles from headquarters, where he thought proper to stay three days. There were only two visitors there besides himself. One of them, an oldish, shabby-looking man, with a black hat, minus part of the crown, and a piece of twine for a ribbon, was very inquisitive, and among other things



asked our officer what excuse he intended to make for his delay in reporting himself to the General.

"'Oh,' said the officer, 'they say Taylor is a very easy old soul, and I can easily make up an excuse.' On going to bed that night, the officer asked the landlord who that impudent, inquisitive old fellow was? 'Why,' said the host, 'dost you know General Taylor?' About an hour afterwards, at midnight, the tramp of a horse's feet was heard, making quick tracks towards head-quarters."

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The extreme simplicity of General Taylor's habits has become proverbial; but, like all human beings, if the old General was not proud of his dress, or of the pride and pomp of "glorious war," he had his weakness, and it displayed itself in his state carriage. This magnificent vehicle was one of the last purchases the old soldier made ere he started for the wars. It was none of these high-backed, four-horse, soft-cushioned, coat-of-arms panelled affairs, such as Martin Van Buren imported from England to ride in when he was President, but it was, in vulgar parlance, a Jersey wagon, and one of the ugliest and most inconvenient ones ever sent out from that sand-soil State. We have no doubt that this same wagon was kept on hand in some little country town until it was discovered that no one would buy it, and it was sent out to New Orleans to sell. The General looked at it, and it struck his fancy as one of the most luxuriant, strong axle-treed, hard-seated, low-backed, first-rate carriages that ever was made; so he bought it, shipped it, and in due time landed it at Corpus Christi. It was evidently General Taylor's pet; he kept it standing right up beside Ringgold and Duncan's batteries, as if he would have those sons of thunder blaze away at any body that did not say that it was the greatest carriage that ever was made.

The old General was never seen in it. By many it was supposed that the top was so low that such a thing was impossible. When he started to Matamoros from Corpus Christi, it was made the carrier of the old General's blue chest, and the celebrated overcoat that got wounded at Buena Vista. After the battles of the 8th and 9th, a change for two hours and fifty-seven minutes came over his feelings—he had read, no doubt, of "General Scott's splendid military carriage"—and the General came to the conclusion that he must put on a little grandeur, so he got into *his* military carriage, and started from Point Isabel to Matamoros, to complete his victories by driving Arista from that town. No record was ever made when he resumed his old gray, but long before half the distance was completed, a sick soldier was in the General's place, and he himself was again on horseback. Nothing of an exciting nature occurred to the old "Jersey carryall" for a long time. It was duly dragged about, and stationed where its owner could see it taken care of and honoured. It went up to Monterey, and finally down to Victoria. When the General was ordered back from his march to Vera Cruz, the old wagon-top looked exceedingly surly, and its wheels screeched awfully. On this trip it met with a sad disaster. A drunken teamster run his baggage wagon into it, tore the hind wheels off, and otherwise laid it in ruins. Now the old General had philosophy enough to pocket, without repining, the orders that were so humiliating to his pride; but he had not philosophy enough to pocket the destruction of his state carriage, so he rode up to the unfortunate teamster, and catching him by both ears, he shook the fellow's head violently, exclaiming "what did you do that for? I brought it (the wagon) all the way from Corpus Christi!" The excitement soon passed away, the old General cast a lingering glance at the ruins of his pet, and left it to decay beside the road.

Among the volunteers in the Florida campaign was a "gentleman's son"—a full private, who heartily sick of rainy weather, mud, and no shelter, first went to his captain with his complaints, but meeting with no particular sympathy, resolved to have a talk with General Taylor himself. Arrived at the commander's quarters, the General was pointed out to him, but he was rather incredulous. "*That* old fellow General Taylor? Nonsense!" Satisfied, however, that such was even the case, he marched up, and rather patronizingly opened his business.

"General Taylor, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, General, I'm devilish glad to see you—am, indeed." The General returned the civility.

"General, you'll excuse me, but since I've been here I've been doing all I could for you—have, indeed; but the fact is, the accommodations are very bad—they are, indeed; mud, sir! *bleeged* to lie down in it, actually; and the fact is, General, I'm a *gentleman's son*, and not used to it!"

The General, no doubt strongly impressed with the fact of having a *gentleman's son* in his army, expressed his regret that such annoyance should ever exist, under any circumstances, in a civilized army.

"Well—but, General, what am I to do?"

"Why, really, I don't know, unless you take my place."

"Well, now, that's civil—'tis, indeed. Of course don't mean to *turn you out*, but a few hours' sleep—a cot, or a bunk, or any thing, would be so refreshing! Your place—where is it, General?"

"Oh, just drop down—*any where about here*—any place about camp will answer!"

The look which the "gentleman's son" gave the General was rather peculiar.

"Well, no wonder they call you 'Rough and Ready,'" said he; and, amid the smiles of all but "Rough and Ready" himself, the "gentleman's son" returned to take his chance of the weather.

#### TAYLOR'S COURAGE AND DETERMINATION.

"By way of illustrating an important characteristic of General Taylor, to wit, *determination*, I will briefly relate a scene that occurred on the battleground of Buena Vista, during the action of the 23d. At a time when the fortunes of the day seemed extremely problematical—when many of our side even despaired of success—the General took his position on a commanding height, overlooking the two armies. This was about three or perhaps four o'clock in the afternoon. The enemy, who had succeeded in gaining an advantageous position, made a fierce charge upon our column, and fought with a desperation that seemed for a time to insure success to their arms. The struggle lasted for some time. All the while, General Taylor was a silent spectator, his countenance exhibiting the most anxious solicitude, alternating between hope and despondency. His staff, perceiving his perilous situation, (for he was exposed to the fire of the enemy,) approached him and implored him to retire. He heeded them not. His thoughts were intent upon victory or defeat. He knew not at this moment what the result would be. He felt that that engagement was to decide his fate. He had given all his orders and selected his position. If the day went against him he was irretrievably lost; if for him, he could rejoice in common with his countrymen, at the triumphant success of our arms.

"Such seemed to be his thoughts—his determination. And when he saw the enemy give way and retreat in the utmost confusion, he gave free vent to

his pent-up feelings. His right leg was quickly disengaged from the pommel of the saddle, where it had remained during the whole of the fierce encounter—his arms, which were calmly folded over his breast, relaxed their hold—his feet fairly danced in the stirrups, and his whole body was in motion. It was a moment of the most exciting and intense interest. His face was suffused with tears. The day was won—the victory complete—his little army saved from the disgrace of a defeat, and he could not refrain from weeping for joy at what had seemed to so many, but a moment before, as an impossible result. Long may the noble and kind-hearted old hero live to enjoy the honours of his numerous and brilliant victories, and many other honours that a grateful country will ere long bestow upon him.”—*Lieutenant Corwin.*

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Extract of a letter from a volunteer at Monterey:—“You may probably wish to know how a *young soldier* feels when he smells powder for the first time—I will tell you. At first I felt as though I should like to have been out of the party—I felt decidedly ‘queer,’ and looked from one end of the battalion to the other to see if I could see any one *run*. Yes, I felt like *running*, I must acknowledge, but they all stood like men, and I could not bear the idea to be the first to *run*, and, therefore, kept on with the rest. The Tennesseans were about ten yards in our advance, the Mississippians about the same distance in our rear. You will therefore see, gentlemen, that I had to ‘stand up to the rack, fodder or no fodder.’

“At this moment an awful fire was opened on the Tennesseans. They fell by scores, but the balance stood like veterans. We were fired upon by a cross fire from nine and twelve pounders, and a murderous discharge of small arms from the corner of streets, doors, windows, and tops of houses.

“By this time, Colonel Watson was trying to get us ahead of the Tennesseans, (having applied for the advance, and received from General Taylor the promise of it,) and, while in the act of giving three cheers, was shot down. He was on our right, some twenty paces ahead of us. I saw him fall, and all apprehension now left me. I made an involuntary effort to get to him to afford him help, but was borne on by the pressure of the mass behind, and willingly yielded to it, impelled by a thirst for revenge that would have carried me through a storm of bullets or laid me out in Monterey. We were now within fifty yards of the wall, behind which the enemy were lying in perfect security, and at this moment General Taylor rode up in gallant style, accompanied by a young officer.

“Now came the thrilling scene of all. A huge Tennessean sung out ‘silence, men—here comes Old Zack—three cheers for Old Zack!’ Three tremendous cheers were now given, until

‘Heaven’s broad arch rang back the sound.’

I trembled for his safety, for I expected to see him fall every moment.”

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A volunteer at Monterey thus mentions Taylor’s calm bravery:—“Monterey is the strongest place naturally that I ever saw with the eye or in print. There is an open plain, three to four miles long, and four or five wide in front, except a range of hills, about forty feet high, behind which the town lies. In the rear, and on the right and left, the mountains back right up to it, and rise several hundred feet high abruptly and almost perpendicularly, while the only pass is through a mountain gorge directly in its centre. I was within ten feet of Gen-



eral Taylor, in the town, on the 21st. He was as cool as a cucumber, and ordered us to pass into the city and break open the houses. God knows how any of us got out."

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At the time General Taylor was conducting the Florida war against the Seminoles, he became remarkable among the Indians for his singular disregard of danger. He never hesitated to move about unattended, and generally, when riding out on important business, he kept a mile or two ahead of his escort. No matter how many Indians were prowling about, the old General seemed unconscious that they would harm him, and often, when only armed parties could escape attack, General Taylor would trust himself alone under some wide-spreading tree in close proximity with the enemy, and thus circumstanced, he would eat his frugal meal, and if desirable indulge in a sound sleep. At the time the Indians were most troublesome to our troops, General Taylor announced his determination to go from Fort King to Tampa Bay, which journey would take him through nearly one hundred miles of hostile country. The jaunt was considered by every body as a most desperate adventure. The morning for starting came, when the General's travelling companions, Major Bliss and a young lieutenant, began to look wistfully around for the appearance of the escort. In due time, six dragoons, all saddled and bridled, made their appearance. There was a force to meet several thousand wily Seminoles, who filled up every nook and corner between Fort King and Tampa Bay! After some hesitation, one of the General's friends suggested that the escort was not sufficiently strong, and that a requisition should be made for a greater force. The General examined the appearance of the six dragoons attentively for a moment, and then remarked if the number was not sufficient, two more might be added to it.

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Colonel Jefferson Davis, who, from the connection existing, is not very likely to be influenced by other than true and proper motives, is represented by the New Orleans papers as having used the following language concerning General Taylor:—After complimenting his fellow companions from other States, he for a moment dwelt upon the virtues of the old hero who had led them all to victory, and to whom they looked up as children to a parent. Colonel Davis said that General Taylor had shown himself the distinguished soldier of the age, yet he was equally remarkable for his kindness of heart and simplicity of habits, his strong judgment, and excellent sense. He alluded to the fact that General Taylor had shared the humblest soldier's fortune in the campaign; that he had in every thing identified himself with his troops. He alluded to that hour of the battle of Buena Vista, when the day seemed, if not lost, to be going against our arms, when General Taylor, amidst the thickest of the iron hail, rode upon the plateau, and calmly surveyed the scene. Vast as were the consequences of that hour, he appeared to fear no danger, expect no harm. From that moment, said Colonel Davis, the volunteers felt assured of victory. The presence of that old man inspired a courage that could not be overcome; and not a soldier present, said he, (pointing to the regiment before him,) but felt then willing to die rather than yield an inch. It was not, continued Colonel Davis, alone on the battle-field that we learned to love General Taylor. The excitement of the carnage over, the same soul that could remain unmoved when his friends were falling like leaves around him, who could look unblanched upon the front of the thundering artillery, became the poor soldier's most sympathizing friend; and the eye, so stern in battle, was as mild as the tender-hearted matron's."

TAYLOR'S HUMANITY AND GOOD NATURE.

A correspondent of the Montgomery (Alabama) Journal, says that General Taylor lately had occasion to visit Point Isabel, after the battle of Buena Vista, and the captain of the steamboat had reserved a suite of state-rooms for the General's accommodation. There were several sick and wounded volunteers on the boat, en route for New Orleans, who had to take the wayfare incident to a crowded boat, and particularly so on this occasion. General Taylor saw all this, and at once ordered these men to be placed in his state-rooms, and proper attention paid them. It was rather a cold, rainy day when this occurred. The deck hands and many others on the boat did not know General Taylor. The wind blew high, and the firemen had raised a sail in front of the boilers to protect themselves from the rain, and under this sail there were some old mattresses; here General Taylor laid down and went to sleep. At supper time great inquiries were made for the General, and servants sent off to look him up. But he could not be found! At last some one going below, inquired of a fireman if he had seen any thing of such and such a man—the fireman said no, but added, “there is a clever old fellow asleep there under the sail, in front of the fire!” It was General Taylor. Yes, sweet indeed, must have been the sleep of such a man, who has the heart to change places with the poor sick soldier, as General Taylor did on this occasion; such humanity stands out in bold relief, and greatly mitigate the evils incident to war.

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The following, from the Picayune, speaks for itself:—“The parting scene between the Mississippi Regiment and General Taylor, we are told, was affecting in the extreme. As the men marched by him to return to their homes, overpowered with a recollection of the high deeds which had endeared them to him, and with their demonstrations of respect and affection, he attempted in vain to address them. With tears streaming down his furrowed cheeks, all he could say was, ‘Go on boys—go on—I can’t speak!’”

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“J. E. D.,” the Monterey correspondent of the New Orleans Picayune, tells the following story:

“Did you ever see a collection of men that could not turn out a specimen of what is generally termed ‘a character?’ If you ever did, you can, to make use of a vulgarism, ‘beat my time’ considerably, for I never did, and what is more, never expect to. The next door to my quarters a company of Virginia volunteers are stationed, and as they turn out to roll-call and drill I have a good opportunity of observing them. I had noticed among the men a short, thick-set Irishman, whose head seemed to have settled down between his shoulders a trifle too far to permit him to sit as a model for a sculptor, although he will answer very well for a soldier. There was something so odd about his appearance and in his manner of performing the manual, that I was convinced he was ‘a character,’ and upon expressing my belief of that fact, I discovered that I was not far wrong, the following anecdote being related of him:

“‘Plaze sir,’ said the soldier, touching his hat to his captain, ‘whin will we be paid off, sir?’ ‘In a few days, Patrick,’ replied the officer. ‘Yis, sir,’ continued Pat, ‘and whin, sir, will we be after Santy Anny, the blackguard?’ ‘That’s more than I can tell you, Patrick; it’s rather hard to tell when or where he will show himself,’ replied the officer. ‘Yis, sir, thank you kindly, sir, we’ll be paid off in a few days any ways, however,’ said Pat, as he touched his hat again and retired. In a few days he appeared again and opened the



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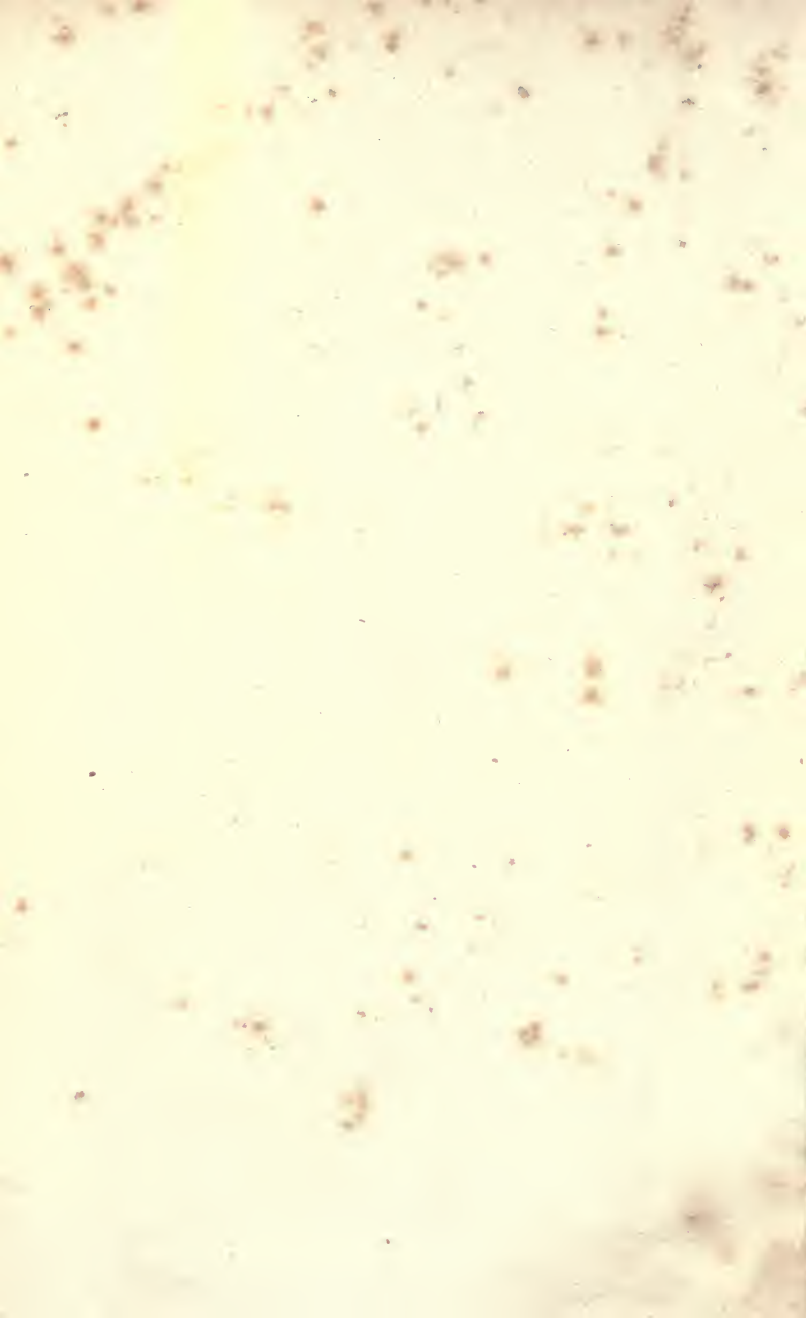
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